Wednesday, August 12, 2009 • Vol. 24 / No. 245

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

INCREDIBLE BULK American servicemen line up during a formation on board the USS George Washington, an aircraft carrier with the US Navy 7th Fleet, which docked near Corregidor Island on Tuesday. AP

No. 25 Times Street to undergo renovations

By Christine O. Avendaño

AFTER 40 YEARS AS THE AQUINO RESIdence, No. 25 Times Street will undergo another renovation, an exercise that will help the Aquino family "move on" now that the much beloved matriarch of the house is gone.

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday confirmed the statements made by his sister, TV host Kris Aquino, that the residence of their deceased parents, former President Corazon Aquino and martyred Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., MD, 23 TIMES ST.

Recto quits GMA Cabinet

DEMOCRACY LEADER Aung San Suu Kyi file photo taken on Nov. 23, 1995, shows Burma's prodemocracy icon addressing a press conference at her house in Rangoon. In Manila, protesters tie yellow ribbons and place yellow chrysanthemums in a flower box as a symbol of their solidarity and support for Burma's democracy leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi at the Burmese Embassy in Makati City on Tuesday. AFP/ROMEO RANOCO

Suu Kyi found guilty; ruling sparks global protests

RANGOON, BURMA—A COURT YESterday found democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of violating her house arrest by allowing an uninvited American to stay at her home.

The head of the military junta that rules Burma (Myanmar) ordered Suu Kyi to serve an 18-month sentence under house arrest.

The 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate has already been in detention for 14 of the last 20 years, mostly under house arrest, and the extension will restrain her from the political scene while the country holds junta-organized elections next year.

In Manila, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said the conviction was "incomprehensible and deplorable" and urged the Burmese government to reconsider its decision.

"This new ruling places doubt on the commitment of the government of Myanmar to hold free, fair, participatory, transparent and credible elections in 2010," Romulo said in a statement.

He said this development was a step backward and again sidetracked Burma's efforts to carry out its own "Roadmap for Democracy," its avowed program of releasing politi- ELLA KYS A6

Palace: He wants to run for Senate

By TJ Burgonio, Christine O. Avendaño and Bayani San Diego Jr.

SOCIOECONOMIC PLANning Secretary Ralph Recto is resigning from the Cabinet effective Aug. 16 to prepare for next year's senatorial elections, Malacañang officials said yesterday.

"He's running for senator, and he wants to prepare early enough," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in a phone interview, quoting Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio.

It was President Macapagal-Arroyo who announced at the start of the closed-door Cabinet meeting at the Department of Foreign Affairs that Recto was making his "valedictory" report on the Global Recession Impact News, Claudio said.

The President has not named a replacement for Recto, Claudio said.

Recto did not make himself available for comment yesterday. RECTO/A17

Martin R very close to GMA sons

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TO CASUAL OBSERVERS, LEYTE Rep. Martin Romualdez is the "sidekick" of the First Couple's elder son, Pangasinan Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo.

By accounts, Romualdez, 45, and Mikey, 40, were a team in soliciting signatures early this year to push Charter change in the House of Representatives, and the campaign was even held during Romualdez's birthday party at his Forbes Park mansion.

They also reportedly approached Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia Jr. in March to make MARTIN R, A17

RP's first ePassport issued to GMA

By Cynthia D. Balana

SERIAL NUMBER EA0000001.

That's the number of the country's first ePassport that the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) yesterday issued to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ms Arroyo yesterday graced the launching of the state-of-the-art passport during the DFA's 111th founding celebration.

More than 60 countries now use the ePassport.

To illustrate the document's features, the President scanned EPASSPORT, A6

BON APPETIT Militant students show how much a simple meal costs a simple Filipino citizen in the midst of an economic crisis during Tuesday's protest along Mendiola Avenue in Manila. RICHARD GOMEZ

President Macapagal-Arroyo in a pensive mood during Tuesday's launching of Philippine product depot and groundbreaking ceremony of the DTI building along Diosdado Macapagal Avenue in Pasay City. LEONARD ONG

Bishops still irked over Le Cirque dinner

By Dona Pazzibugan and Christian V. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG MAY HAVE REFUSED TO apologize for the $200,000 dinner of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her entourage at the ritzy Le Cirque in New York, but Catholic bishops are not letting the issue die down.

Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo, who champions the cause of landless farmers, yesterday called on Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez, who purportedly picked up the tab, to donate the amount (or close to P5 million) to the impoverished.

"We can challenge those who paid for the dinner to also give the same amount to feed the poor," Pabillo said.

The bishop said it was not right to use money—"whether government money or the money of any rich person"—to assist flawed ways.

"Even if it was not the government but someone else, whoever shouldered the dinner tab has a responsibility because BISHOPS, A17

Guinness Book slot eyed for Cory guard

By Tarra Quismundo

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police is pushing the hype over the "marksmen" cop one step further.

After rewarding him with cash and a promotion, the PNP will try to get worldwide recognition for Police Officer 2 Danilo Malalo Jr. GUINNESS, A3

TRIBUTE TO AQUINOS

'Ako si Ninoy,' in art, music, dance is like prayer, opens Aug. 14 to 16

By Fe Zamora

THE PLAY WAS MADE IN BALIC-Balic, not Broadway.

But it is no less significant, as the late President Corazon Aquino would have loved to see a musical about her husband, martyred opposition leader Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., produced by a theater group from Balic-Balic in Manila.

"Ako si Ninoy," presented by the Philippine Stagers Foundation (PSF) from the densely populated Balic-Balic, Sampaloc, tells the stories of everyday Filipino heroes—the overseas worker longing for home, a doctor serving the masses, a union leader staying faithful to the cause, a popular actor leaving show biz for school.

Cory Aquino had exhorted students to get inspiration from heroes in their community at the launching of the "I Am Ninoy" movement in November 2008, one of her last AKO, A14

WHAT'S INSIDE

Wife of Makati Councilor Jejomar Binay Jr. dies in childbirth; 29 NEWS / A4

Cops kill suspected kidnappers; trader rescued METRO / A21

Noynoy confused, won't decide now on 2010 run NEWS/ A2

River in Zambales changes course, swallows villages ACROSS / A14

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY, August 14: Mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. Luzon will experience cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Cotabato/Koronadal	Mostly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Davao	Mostly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Mostly cloudy
Laoag	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly cloudy
Cabanatuan	Partly cloudy	Ozamiz	Mostly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Iloilo	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy
Kalibo	Partly cloudy	Butuan	Mostly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2* (2PM Draw): 22 11
(4PM Draw): 5 25

SUERTRES* (2PM): 6 8 1
(4PM): 0 2 1
(9PM): 5 1 0

SIX DIGIT* 1 8 6 5 6 4
* (No winners as of 9PM.)

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN 4 10 24 31 32 37
P3,000,000.00

SUPERLOTTO 6/49 9 35 38 39 47 48
P58,605,742.80

Noynoy: Dazed and confused

Loren, Noli kiss and make up

By Christine D. Avendaño

FROM BEING BITTER RIVALS DURING the 2007 vice presidential race, Sen. Loren Legarda and Mon Personnel Noli de Castro have apparently reconciled.

For the first time in years, Legarda and De Castro talked and entertained about the good times during a phone trip to Cebu over the weekend for the wedding of the daughter of Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia.

Legarda told reporters that she initiated the reconciliation with De Castro, saying she was moved to do so by the sacrifices of the late President Corazon Aquino.

She said she attended the funeral Mass for Aquino at the Manila Cathedral last week where she sat with Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., and the latter's wife, Bing. The three began talking about the sacrifices of the former President.

"I said if President Aquino who gave up so much in her life [can forgive], why shouldn't we make the sacrifice of forgiving people who we think have wronged us," she recalled telling the Pimentels in Filipino.

She said Pimentel then pointed to De Castro who was sitting right in front of them.

And that was why when she found herself on the same plane with De Castro last Saturday she told him, "Sen. Noynoy, I've forgotten and forgiven everyone who in my view have wronged me."

She said De Castro told her he had done her no wrong.

She then told him that they should just blame each other anymore because "what's important [is] I have forgiven."

During the plane ride, the two talked about politics, family, personal things and the endangered tree that she had glued on him in the past, Legarda said.

The senator said a person who knows how to forgive ends up having "light inner feeling."

By Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. BENIGNO "NOYNOY" AQUINO III IS NOT INTERested in running either for president or vice president, thus far.

He joked that his running for higher office in 2010 might come in a block vote from viewers, counting as it will on the heels of the death of their mother, former President Corazon Aquino, on Aug. 1.

The senator said that such a classic decision might make his fans' choice do-something equally successful.

"Devang dapag magdidilara ako at mahigpit ang mga kapatid ko, baka naman ang labas ng kapatid ko eh maghilom sa Guadalupe Bridge at mandoon sa vibo at sabihin, 'Talaga bang totoo ito? Tuesday na eto kaya, 'no?" he said.

(It's [also] as if I declare my candidacy and surprise my viewers, they might all line up at Guadalupe Bridge at the railroad tracks and say to me, 'Are you really going to run? Then we're going to jump.')

Aquino, who was a three-term congressman before being elected senator in 2007, acknowledged that there was only so much he could do both as a public figure and the brother in an orphaned family.

"I promised my parents I will take care of my sisters, so I can't give them too much focus. They are now blaming the tasks that belonged to my mother," he said.

Time-out from politics

He also said that he was not prepared to shift to campaign mode right after the death of his mother, whose funeral on Aug. 5 brought the people back out on the streets in an outpouring of love for a icon of democracy.

He said he wanted a "time-out" from politics to "fix my emotions to still be innovative on my part as do it [one] of them this election."

He also said he was considering the fact that the traditional mourning period of one year after the death of a loved one would not be seen for him until August 2010, three months after the May 11 elections.

Aquino likewise said that he didn't see himself as the only one who could assist the country.

Different reality

He said the political reality in 1986 was totally different from 2010 because at the time, his mother had to run to unite a fragmented opposition against the Marcos regime.

"The major difference was that economy was the sole figure that could unite the opposition at the time. If they didn't unite, Marcos would have won the snap elections. So this particular case, I'm not convinced that I'm the only person who can continue the legacy," he said.

He said that those who fought with his mother during the 1986 People Power revolt and those who were too young then or were born after Edsa were now pushing a "transition issue."

This, he said, was to ensure that the opposition was united in order to effect reforms in government.

But if he were to be the cause of disunity in the opposition, then he would not run.

'Still confused'

"If I will be the cause of further divisiveness, maybe that's not right," he said.

"So bottom line, I'm still confused. I'm thinking it over. To begin with, I don't have plans to run in 2010. What I'm hoping for is to ensure the victory of those who are worthy of the [elective posts]," he said.

Aquino assured, however, that he was not closing the door on anything.

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Telco says it earns only 2¢ per text

By Dec. C. Cabanangan Jr.

A LEADING MOBILE PHONE provider yesterday told Congress that telecommunication firms actually earned only two centavos from each of the 2 billion text messages Filipinos send every day.

But members of the House ways and means committee apparently did not believe the claim. Committee chairman Eric Singson said they would pursue House Bill 6631, which slaps a five-centavo excise tax on text messages or short message service (SMS).

The bill, filed by Bovon Rae Representative Salapuddin, also bans telecommunication firms from pursuing on the subject not to consumers.

Jovie Espenilla, representative of Globe, said Singson's bill would generate P300 million in revenues to help government cushion the global economic crunch. Singson's bill commands the tax on text for infrastructure technology education.

During the committee hearing, Globe Telecom senior vice president Regulio Sabalburo said the average cost of a text message was only 22 centavos (including promotions and bundled pricing), which left telecommunications firms with only two centavos profit.

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4 big hospitals won't join 'holiday'

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

AT LEAST FOUR PRIVATE HOSPITALS in Metro Manila said they would not join a "hospital holiday" being planned by a group of private hospitals to protest the start of price control on five essential medicines on Aug. 15.

Officials of the privately owned Makati Medical Center, Medical City, St. Luke's Hospital and University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital were at the meeting.

So said the price difference between the existing market price and the new price ceilings should be shouldered by the drug manufacturers and not by the retailers which includes drugstores and hospital pharmacies.

He said the DOH was waiting for PHAP officials to return so they could sit down for a dialogue.

"They have been invited so we expect to talk soon," he said. "It may be that not all private hospitals know the details of the [executive order] so maybe it's a case of inadequate information dissemination."

PHAP legal counsel Ulo Ike Castro yesterday said they were not satisfied with the "verbal commitment" given by drug companies to give instances of urgent need and shortages once the price reductions start.

Castro said their members—hospitals that they may go into "bankruptcy" if the implementation of the drug maximum retail price is not delayed.

"We will tell [the staff] that we can't afford to pay [their] salaries anymore. We are not blackmailing anyone. But this is something that could happen. Will the staff still want to report to work? If no one will report to work, the hospital will be closed," he said.

Makabangay's EO 821 is setting a maximum retail price on the antihypertensive drug amlodipine, the anti-cholesterol drug atorvastatin, the antibiotic/antibacterial drug azithromycin, and the anti-

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Solon chides big oil firms over price hike

THE SECRET IS IN THE WORLD MARket prices of oil should not be the cause of the current increased prices of petroleum products, as these were bought on a lower price a month ago, according to Zambales Rep. Ma. Milagros Magsaysay.

Magsaysay pointed out that the big oil companies have a 30-day inventory. This means that their supplies at any given time were bought a month before at the prevailing market prices, which are usually lower.

However, she noted that whenever the international prices of oil increase, the oil companies promptly bring up their prices even though what they are selling were bought at a lower price.

Noting that the price of oil last July was about $72 per barrel, Magsaysay said the price of oil products being sold now should be based on this price, and not the higher August price.

30-day stock

"So you procured gas at $72.83 in July. How come there is an August price increase when you still have stock? How come after a few days you increase prices when you still have inventory? I'm wondering now how come these companies can increase prices when they claim to have a stock of 30 days," she told a hearing of the House committee on energy.

She said the increase in the international price of oil this month should only be reflected in the next month's prices.

Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo said it was these the oil companies could still afford to bring down their prices, "they will not lose money if they bring down their prices."

Ifugao representative Mark Cuaresma said investors were not a factor in pricing because what the oil firms go by is replacement cost.

Quezon said the oil companies have to raise their prices when world market prices rise because they would then use the profits to buy future supplies.

"If we sell at the current price, what do we use to buy the next product?" he asked.

Magsaysay directed the Bureau of Internal Revenue to submit copies of oil payments made to it by the oil companies. She also asked the Bureau of Customs and the Department of Energy for the records of their inspections to check if the companies have been paying the correct taxes.

Leila B. Salaverria

Mar pushes bill on LPG safety

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MAR ROXAS YESTERDAY VOWED to fast track the approval of a bill that aims to prevent the incidents of explosion of defective LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) tanks which numbered in the since 2004.

Roxas yesterday held a news conference where dealers of LPG tanks cautioned the public against buying fake and "chop chop" LPG tanks meant for scrapping.

Of the 12 million tanks in the country, three million are for scrapping and another three million for refurbishing, according to Mercy Pastrana, president of the Philippine Association of Cylinder Manufacturers Incorporated.

Roxas also presented to reporters Abigail Baginda, who showed scars of fire and severed degree burns she got from an LPG tank that blew up in an eatery that she and her boyfriend were in last June.

"We should put a stop to the circulation of these substandard tanks," Estrada said.

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Corrections

IN THE AUG. 7 ISSUE, an Across the Nation photo caption on Page A16 misnamed the place where former President Corazon Aquino's wake was held. The wake was held on the La Salle Green Hills...not the De La Salle University...campus in Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.... see Ann Juan

IN THE AUG. 8 ISSUE, a photo caption on Page A13 misnamed the surname of a National Artist. The National Artist is Arturo Luz.... see Luzes.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a Saturday Special story on Page F1—"National Artists, an Ivory dolled up artistic hunt"—misnamed the first name of a National Artist. The National Artist is Benedicto.... see Benjamin....Cabrera.

IN THE AUG. 9 ISSUE, a front page article—"Tony family views on the bus, began about 10"—misnamed that the late President Corazon Aquino lived in her bungalow on Times Street in Quezon City, until the date of her death on Aug. 5. Aquino lived with her eldest daughter Ballsy Cruz in Green Meadows, Quezon City, after the former President was diagnosed with cancer last year.

THE SAME ARTICLE misstated the name of Ballsy Aquino's husband. Her husband is Manolo.... not Miguel....Manlulu.

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a photo caption on Page D4 of the Anthony Librayda section misstated the surname of a lawyer. The lawyer is Erin Tañada.... not Dyokno.

IN THE AUG. 10 ISSUE, the "Farrelle" column of Ramon J. Farolan—"They also serve who only stand and wait"—misnamed the surname of a member of the honor guard during the late President Corazon Aquino's funeral cortege. The member of the honor guard is Danilo Malafe Jr.... not Mialafe. The same error appeared in previous stories.

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PAMPANGA VOTE RECOUNT

Panlilio says he could lose

By Kristine L. Alave

GOV. ED PANLILIO (MD) YESTERDAY HE wouldn't be surprised if his rival, Lilia Pineda, won the vote recount of the 2007 Pampanga gubernatorial race, citing her experience and suspected tampering of some ballot boxes that were brought to Manila.

A day before the Commission on Elections begins the recount, Panlilio said he did not have the money to fund the revision or examination of votes, which was prompted by Pineda's electoral complaint which she filed immediately after the May elections.

He said the recount was too expensive for him, especially after the Comelec ordered more revisors or inspectors than usual to hasten the process.

"Before, it was four committees [of three revisors each]. Now they made it 21. Right now, we don't have the money to match them. One revisor costs P1,000 a day," he said.

Tampered ballot boxes

Of the three revisors per committee, one would come from the Comelec and one each from the contending parties.

Panlilio said his camp had asked the Comelec to bring the number of committees back down to four.

The provincial governor also noted that some of the ballot boxes that were brought to the Comelec main office in Intramuros from Pampanga appeared to have been tampered with.

He showed reporters photos of ballot boxes with their padlocks missing at the Church sponsored The Forum, a news conference in Intramuros.

"These boxes have tampered seals. The majority of the ballot boxes is questionable," he said.

Panlilio, who took a leave from the priesthood to run for Pampanga governor last year, beat Pineda by a tiny margin.

Pineda is an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the wife of Bedolfo "Beng" Pineda, an alleged illegal gambling lord.

The recount, Panlilio said, was a landmark case that would become part of "[a] reproduction."

"This will be a question for future candidates who don't have funds. There is only who have more money can bully them and file a complaint against them," he said.

The delivery of 4,600 ballot boxes from Pampanga to Comelec headquarters in Intramuros was completed yesterday.

Election Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer, who is in charge of the recount, said he expects the revision to be completed in 45 days, as ordered by Comelec Chair Jose Melo.

"We want the revision tomorrow," Ferrer said yesterday.

Ferrer said the Comelec raised the number of revision committees to ensure that the results would be out before next May's national elections.

Jamby loses bid for CA slot

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DENIED A PETITION of Sen. Jamby Madrigal seeking exact representation for her PDP-Laban party in the bicameral Commission on Appointments.

The high court, in a 17-page decision penned by Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales, said Madrigal failed to show that she or her political party was deprived of a commission seat as a result of the commission's makeup.

Madrigal had questioned the composition of the CA, arguing that the makeup of the house panel is the body that screens presidential appointments and military promotions violated the constitutional requirement of proportional representation.

Madrigal said the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) and the Kilusang ng Mabuhang Pilipinas (Kampi) had more seats than they were entitled to.

But the high court denied Madrigal's petition, saying that she failed to show she had suffered a direct injury due to the CA makeup.

It also said Madrigal should have taken the matter up with both houses of Congress. Aurea Calica, Sandy Araneta

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Binay daughter-in-law dies

THE WIFE OF MAKATI COUNCILOR JEJOMAR Erwin Binay Jr., the son of Mayor Jejomar Binay, died yesterday of complications from a pregnancy.

Records show Lucia Binay, 29, died at 12:06 p.m. at the Makati Medical Center, according to Amy Salgado, head of the Makati city information office.

She gave birth to a premature baby girl who remains confined in an incubator at the hospital's neonatal section.

"The baby is alive and is under intensive monitoring by the doctors," Salgado said.

Binay's son confined at the hospital for some days last month before her death because of a difficult pregnancy.

She and her husband have three other children—daughters Jejomar Alex, 6, and Maria Isabel, 5, and a son Jejon-old son, Jejomar III.

The wake will be held at the Binays' residence on Bonanza Street, San Antonio Village, Makati, according to Nico Millares, assistant to the mayor's office. Nikko Catherine Calleja

Aklanons against poverty and hunger

Dr. Victorina S. Lanza, schools district superintendent of the Department of Education division office in Kalibo, Aklan signs a declaration of commitment to support the National Nutrition Council's (NNC) Promote Good Nutrition program under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Accelerated Hunger Mitigation Program (AHMP). NNC Regional Nutrition Program Coordinator for Western Visayas, Ms. Nona B. Tady, witnesses the signing.

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TRUE COLOR Yellow ribbons are seen on Times Street sign posts where former President Cory Aquino lived for decades. Flowers, candles and other tokens of love and respect overflow to the sidewalk fronting Cory's house on Times Street, Quezon City. GMA NEWS

No. 25 Times Street to undergo renovations

From page A1

would be renovated starting this month.

The Aquino family had lived in the modest one-story house since 1961 and according to Noynoy, it was last remodeled in 1992.

"So it has many defects now," Noynoy said of the family house, where he currently resides.

He said he and his four sisters had talked about renovating the house on "several occasions" as Kris wanted to build a separate room for her son Joshua.

According to Noynoy, his nephew Joshua goes to school nearby and it would be better for him to stay in the Times Street house.

Designed by Kris

At one point and apparently just recently, Kris had asked Noynoy if he would want to tear their mother's room but he said he would rather stay in his own room.

His younger sister Kris, who is to show biz and makes more money, will be the "consensor, architect, chief designer and financier" of the project, Noynoy said, chuckling.

On a serious note, he explained that the renovation was purely a way for the family to "move on" following the death of their mother.

"So that we could completely move on, the house has to be renovated," Noynoy said in Filipino.

The former President passed away last Aug. 1 after battling colon cancer for more than a year.

Swimming pool

Indeed, the house on No. 25 Times Street had turned into a shrine for Aquino following her death, with neighbors and people from all walks of life bringing flowers and lighting candles to house her memory.

But during her cancer treatment, Aquino had lived with eldest daughter Maria Elena "Ballsy" Cruz in Greenmeadows, Quezon City.

Asked whether his mother's room would be left untouched, the senator said he did not know when Kris' plans were.

He also said he had not seen the blueprints and all he knew for sure was that Kris would build a swimming pool on the grounds.

The business had reported that a few years back, Aquino knocked on one of the neighbor's house to ask permission for her grandson Joshua to play in the pool.

So many memories

Noynoy also said that his mother's prized house would be relocated to their house in Tarlac. In her final years, Aquino was into gardening and painting.

While the senator appeared open a go, the senator said he had asked his sisters to give him a week to move out.

He said he wanted to see Kris' face in reminisce. "If he house had so many memories in the house," he told reporters.

No comment

Meanwhile, Noynoy would rather not comment on the news that TV host Willie Revillame had gone on indefinite leave following his controversial statements on the Aquino funeral cortege last week.

Revillame, had observed, on air, to the insensitive video of Aquino's cortege as his daily noontime show "Wowowee."

He had since apologized on his viewers, to the Aquino family and to the network (ABS-CBN) management "for hurting their feelings."

The TV host said that his request to stop the inserted video was not meant to be disrespectful.

He explained that it was just not appropriate to show a celebrity event alongside what was supposed to be a happy and boisterous program.

Noynoy said he would accept Revillame's explanations "at face value."

Guinness Book slot eyed for Cory guard

From page A1

for his service as an honor guard during last week's funeral march for former President Corazon Aquino.

The PSP has asked the Guinness Book of World Records to cite Mulah's feat of standing still for almost nine hours without food or rest on the aforesaid march that brought Aquino's cortege in the cemetery on Sep. 5.

PSP spokesperson Senior Insp. Leonardo Espina yesterday said an online application had been sent on behalf of the police cop to the Guinness office in England.

"This is for recording an extraordinary feat for the longest time in a funeral procession under the heat of the sun, and ultimately under the rain, while in full dress grills uniform for the late President," Espina said.

The PSP did some research online to check whether records similar to Mulah's feat had been set before.

It came across one Guinness story on Jacquino Bonoli, a Sri Lankan who currently holds the record for the longest time spent standing motionless at 21 hours and 28 minutes.

But the PSP remained confident Mulah would earn his own spot in the Guinness book.

A different category

Espina noted that Bonoli performed his stunt under a controlled environment, while Mulah remained on his feet on a moving truck, at times under the rain, and occasionally hit by some moronic crowding the streets down toward to the direction of Aquino's coffin as a farewell ritual.

"[Mulah may be cited] under a different category ... apart from records like that held by Bonoli. Mulah stood motionless under different circumstances," Espina said.

He said the PSP was ready to submit photos and video footage of Mulah's hours on the march if required by Guinness.

"They will confirm that in our application for three to four weeks. We have to wait for the results. They will communicate with us and let's see from there how the process will go," he said.

AFP's turn

It was the first time the PSP sought a citation from the international record body.

Mulah, 25, and three noncommissioned officers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, major praetorian, medals, rank structure, and unexpected publicity after delivering what their superiors called an "exemplary performance" escorting the Aquino cortege.

The three other members of the honor guard were Private First Class Antonio Eadiewa Arman 2nd Class Ernest Lagundaan and Army Officer 3 Felipedo Rodrigues.

Asked whether the AFP would also apply for a Guinness listing on behalf of Eadiewa and company, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr. said: "It's not for us to do. It would be self-serving."

"But if a third party would do that, we will not prevent them," Brawner told the Inquirer.

MAY PAG-ASA NA BA?
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Participants are selected through country level BioCamps organized by Novartis in countries where it operates. Novartis' BioCamp in the Philippines will be held on August 12, 2009, 8AM to 6PM at the AIM Conference Center, Makati City.
Novartis in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology will select two outstanding Filipino students who will represent the country to the international BioCamp.
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2009 MARKS THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS
12 AUGUST IS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL) DAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Theme: "Geneva Conventions: Pagiging Makatao sa Gitna ng Hidwaan"

The Geneva Conventions... continue to remind us, most forcefully of our common obligation to care for each other...
–Nelson Mandela

MESSAGES

Message from the **Department of Foreign Affairs**, the **Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC)** and the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** in observance of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day.

This occasion is one timely and relevant because of the successful removal of ICRC worker employee Eugenio Vagni, from the hands of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group. The safe exit of Vagni, along with Mary Jean Lacaba and Andrew Nuzum on January 15, 2009 was one of the most outrageous act of the terrorist group because it involved unarmed Red Cross volunteers. I am glad that in their misguided way, they saw humanitarian value.

Your theme, "Geneva Conventions: Pagiging Makatao sa Gitna ng Hidwaan," conveys your efforts to value the conventions and universal principles of humanity in the midst of conflict. We acknowledge the sacrifices of the members of the AFP, in the PNP, in all Philippine peacekeeping missions, in times of armed conflicts. My administration is fully supportive of your advocacy in spreading the importance of International Humanitarian Law for our people and country.

Salute to the good work and blessings!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day is observed on August 12 of each year. It is a time to reflect on what needs to be done to soothe the devastating loss and the terrible toll in its long-lasting effects.

The global response to tragedies has been a reassertion of threats to human rights and security. Humanitarian concerns are also addressed through the Law of Armed Conflict – a whole system of legal safeguards that serve the best way to fragile and the protection of individuals.

Through the joint effort of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Senate Chamber of Congress, the R.A. 862 passed which relating to the Senate on May 26, 2009. By 2009, 60th will be celebrated in the Memorial Conference to be commemorated on 12 August.

In the House of Representatives the bill, 862 has been submitted to and approved by the House Committee on Justice and on Human Rights on July 29, 2009. Committee Report No. 1220 consolidates House Bill No. 4849 and House Bill No. 6819, which is now scheduled for second reading.

It was one year and it is was under the Red Cross and to various activities around the world aims to assisted protection, victims and humanitarian aid to vulnerable persons by the side of those suffering the effects of war as well as other man-made and natural disasters.

For twelve light day we encourage everyone to commemorate the IHL. The real participation in the rules of activities the August law to observance. The public must be aware of and be committed to the observance of IHL. While IHL does not prevent wars and armed conflicts, it does help reduce the inhumanity and the effects of war on combatants and non-combatants alike.

To our sisters and our people, let us all be united in commemorating the International Humanitarian Law.

JOSE MIGUEL T. LUKBAN
Chairman and CEO
The Philippine National Red Cross

I wish to extend my warmest greetings to the many friends of various affiliates International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day 2009.

The Department of Foreign Affairs takes pride in co-ordinating with the Department of National Defense and working in partnership with the Philippine National Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross during this year's celebration of International Humanitarian Law Day.

Sixty years ago the world adopted the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols. By doing so, we codified a core system of basic – internationally binding – rules for the protection of the victims of war and to restrict the destruction of the weapons during times of conflict.

Today, under the theme "Geneva Conventions: Pagiging Makatao sa Gitna ng Hidwaan," we recognize the importance of promoting humanitarian law in safeguarding and upholding the rights of civilians who do not take part in the fighting and who can no longer fight.

The Philippines joins the family of nations today in reasserting its commitment to respect and to ensure respect for the conventions and the world-wide international humanitarian law as guide.

We reaffirm our resolve, confident that our efforts will bring us closer to our collective aspirations for a world at peace and for greater progress and prosperity for all peoples.

Mabuhay!

ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Today 12 August 2009, the 1949 Geneva Conventions turn 60: an important milestone for humanitarian law. It is also a time to reflect on the challenges we face now as regards compliance with the rules of armed conflict and violence.

Helping today's observers, offered in the Philippines by Presidential Decree No. 1144 which designates a specific government agency to spearhead in meaningful celebration every year. This means, this every year we, as a nation, collectively remember that more must be humanize under armed conflict and the need for humanitarian law.

It is a continuing challenge to fully implement the spirit of the Geneva Conventions to ensure personnel, respecting armed conflicts as well as civilians. Others are also bound to promote the Geneva Conventions to ensure that they are known and respected not only by the armed forces or all combatants but by the administrators and the consumer as well.

At the end of the day, a wounded soldier gains first aid, or a detainee enjoys humanity, or a civilian protected from the dangers of armed conflict can proud that the Geneva Conventions are alive and well.

ATTY. CLARISSA DIEGO-DAVID
Chairperson, PNRC-IHL Committee

On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Delegation in the Philippines we join the Filipino people in the commemoration of International Humanitarian law (IHL) day 2009. This 60th of August 1949 period, also marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions in which the Philippines was one of the first state parties. It has the honorable point to note ICRC mandate does not have a country office in East Asia. The Philippines is the first State in the region to sign the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, relating to the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem.

ICRC, since respected human dignity and to limit suffering during armed conflicts. In the case of civil war, the general mandate is similar when we see the involvement of many countries such as the Philippines in peacekeeping operations abroad. Many humanitarian principle are rigid from the ICRC in order our activities such as adding values in conflict areas and assisting with those people affected by armed conflicts in the Philippines.

We commend the Philippine authorities, civil society and the Red Cross volunteers throughout the country for their work in making the celebration of IHL Day more memorable this year.

Mabuhay!

JOSE CARLOS TIAN
ICRC Head of Delegation

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Day seeks to commemorate the signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. We in the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) would like to express our support to the IHL Day celebration of August 12 (12 August) to be held in the whole month of August in CY 2009. Mixed with the Rome Statute, International Criminal Court, Ongoing Advocacy in Cavite on Makatao Humanitarian Action Armed conflict which cause the human consequences on the basic principles of IHL and provisions to observance to rules of armed conflict.

IHL is one of the most powerful and the international community has to be depended to ensure the safety and dignity of people in times of war. We need to promote a mission effectiveness with the guiding principle that none is out there are alone. We emphasize four specific areas, IHL prime concern and Advisory additional protocols.

Today, updated by the most fundamental principles of humanity, organizations, conventions, volunteers service, unity and universality, and protected by the Geneva Conventions and other international laws, PNRC staff and volunteers bring people in times of war and disaster.

The PNRC mission as a major advocate of IHL in the Philippines. We will continue to spread the information on IHL and continue to respect laws and living as well as the lessons brought about by armed conflict.

We call on all parties to the 1951 Treaty to observe humanitarian law in operations our mission as Red Cross to alleviate human suffering no only in times of war but also during disasters and calamities where our services are needed, needed.

ANTONIO L. GONZALEZ
Secretary General

First Geneva Convention

The First Geneva Convention protects soldiers who are hors de combat (out of the battle):

- Wounded and sick soldiers.
- Medical personnel, facilities, and equipment.
- Wounded and sick civilian support personnel accompanying the armed forces.
- Military chaplains.
- Civilians who spontaneously take up arms to repel an invasion.

Second and Third Geneva Conventions

The Second Geneva Convention protects wounded and sick combatants while on board ship or at sea.

- Armed forces who are wounded, sick, or shipwrecked.
- Hospital ships and medical personnel.
- Civilians who accompany the armed forces.

The Third Geneva Convention sets out specific rules for the treatment of prisoners of war (POWs) which include:

- Members of the armed forces.
- Volunteer militia, including resistance movements.
- Civilians accompanying the armed forces.

Fourth Geneva Convention

Civilians in areas of armed conflict and occupied territories are protected.

- Pillage, reprisals, indiscriminate destruction of property, and the taking of hostages are prohibited.
- The safety, honor, family rights, religious practices, manners, and customs of civilians are to be respected.
- Civilians are to be protected from murder, torture, or brutality, and from discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, religion, or political opinion.

ICRC

4 Chinese feng shui 'experts' to be deported

FOUR CHINESE WOMEN claiming to be feng shui experts have been ordered deported for working on fortune tokens here without the required visas.

The board of commissioners of the Bureau of Immigration, chaired by Commissioner Marvic Leonen, denied on Aug. 3 a motion by the Chinese nationals to set aside the deportation order issued Feb. 22 by the board, paving the way for their deportation.

Chen Jinying, Huang Tanxei, Ia Meili, and Wu Shuanxia were also placed on the immigration blacklist and banned from re-entering the Philippines.

In a press statement, immigration spokesperson Elvis Balucan Jr. said the Chinese women had been detained at the immigration jail since Feb. 11 this year when they were turned over to the bureau by the Manila police.

Balucan added the women can now be deported to China as the criminal case that was filed against them in court had already been dismissed.

Policemen arrested the women on the complaint of another Chinese woman, identified as Ung Mo Hu, who alleged that she was swindled by the suspects of some P200,000 cash and assorted jewelry.

The victim said that on Feb. 1, while eating inside a fastfood restaurant in Binondo, she was approached and enticed by the suspects, who claimed they were fortune tellers and feng shui experts, to give them her money and jewelry after being told that she would soon get rich and avoid bad luck.

Less than two weeks after their arrest, the bureau approved the accused's request for voluntary deportation but their departure was delayed due to an arrest case filed against them before the Manila Regional Trial Court.

The Manila court dismissed the case against the Chinese on June 22 for insufficiency of evidence.

Burma junta hit for 'reprehensible abuse of power'

NEW YORK—HUMAN RIGHTS Watch on Tuesday blasted the conviction of Burmese democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi as a "reprehensible abuse of power" by the junta and urged regional allies in power for her release.

"This trial was a farce, a brutal distortion of the legal process," said Brad Adams, Asia Director of the New York-based rights group.

"By detaining prominent opposition through bogus trials, the generals are clearly showing why the elections they have been touting for years just won't bring change."

The rights group issued a statement describing the "politically motivated guilty verdict" as "a reprehensible abuse of power by Burma's military government."

"Human Rights Watch called on Burma's allies and other governments to condemn the verdict, demand the Nobel Prize laureate's immediate and unconditional release and impose additional targeted sanctions against the military leadership," it said.

At the end of her customarily condemned trial, the court in Rangoon's notorious Insein Prison sentenced Suu Kyi to three years imprisonment and hard labor for breaching the terms of her house arrest.

The head of Burma's ruling military regime, Than Shwe, signed an order commuting the sentence to allow her to serve out a year-and-a-half under house arrest.

Suu Kyi has been in detention since the junta refused to recognize her National League for Democracy's landslide victory in elections in 1990.

The case has drawn international outrage amid claims that the military regime was using the charges as an excuse to keep her locked up for the elections due in 2010. AFP

Suu Kyi found guilty; ruling sparks global protests

From page A1

cal detractors, including undermining the National League for Democracy and allowing its second-richest participation in free elections.

"The Philippines refutes the statements made by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that there can be no way forward in Myanmar's quest for political, economic and social progress without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," he said.

'Political theater'

The sentence drew outrage from Western governments and human rights groups around the world, and disappointment from Burma's fellow members in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Protesters descended on Burma's diplomatic missions to denounce a trial described by monitors international as "political theater."

In Brussels, the European Union (EU) vowed to hit Than Shwe's junta with more sanctions and Britain demanded an arms embargo.

Suu Kyi looked alert but tired during the 90-minute court session. She stood in the verdict was announced and then thanked foreign diplomats for attending her trial.

"I hope we can all work for peace and prosperity of the country," Suu Kyi said in a soft voice to diplomats seated nearby. She then was led out of the courtroom.

Officials said Suu Kyi was driven back to her lakeside villa in Rangoon (Yangon) in stove the house arrest. They spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the high-profile case.

The American, John Yettaw, was sentenced to seven years in prison, including four with hard labor.

Suu Kyi had faced up to five years in prison for allowing Yettaw to stay for two nights after he swam across a lake to reach her.

Problem child

In July, Asean rejected US calls to expel Burma and opposed the imposition of sanctions, such as those ordered by the United States and European Union.

Burma has been Asean's problem child since it joined the bloc in 1997.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman called for an urgent meeting among his Asean counterparts "to discuss this issue, which is of great concern."

"I am disappointed that they [junta] have found her guilty. That is very disappointing," he said.

"We were hoping that the junta will release her unconditionally and will hold an election to enable Suu Kyi and other political detainees to participate in that election," Anifah said.

Burma's junta snubbed the 12th anniversary general in early July by refusing to let Suu visit Suu Kyi in prison.

The court initially sentenced Suu Kyi to a three-year prison term with hard labor. But after a five-minute recess, Home Minister Maj. Gen. Maung Oo entered the courtroom and read aloud a special order from junta chief Senior Gen. Than Shwe.

The order said Than Shwe was cutting the sentence in half to 18 months and that it could be served under house arrest.

Than Shwe's order, signed on Monday, likewise reduced the sentences of Suu Kyi's two female companions, Khin Khin Win and Win Ma Ma, to 18 months. Both are members of Suu Kyi's political party.

Hero's daughter

Than Shwe said he reduced the sentences as "maintain peace and tranquility" and because Suu Kyi was the daughter of Aung San, a revered hero who won Burma's independence from the British.

Suu Kyi's trial has sparked international outrage and calls for her release and that of more than 2,000 other political prisoners. The sentence sparked angry reaction from across the globe.

"The facade of law preservation is much more monstrous because its real objective is to cover her head with the people for whom she is a beacon of hope and resistance," British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said, calling the verdict a "purely political sentence" aimed at keeping her out of the 2010 election.

Suu Kyi's international lawyer, New York-based Jared Genser, said her court secretary period of detention violated Burma's own laws.

"The real question is how the international community will react—will it do more than simply condemn this latest injustice?" he said.

Hospitalized

The 53-year-old Yettaw, of Falcon, Missouri, was arrested in Insein prison, the site of the trial, on Monday night after hospitalization for epileptic seizures.

The court sentenced him to three years in prison for breaching Suu Kyi's house arrest. The law was also sentenced to three years in prison with hard labor for an immigration violation and to another one-year term with hard labor for swimming in a restricted zone.

It was not immediately clear if the prison terms would be served concurrently.

Yettaw, a devout Christian, earlier told his lawyer that he swam to Suu Kyi's residence to warn her of an assassination attempt that he had seen in a vision.

Yettaw was hospitalized on Monday after suffering seizures. He reportedly suffers from epilepsy, diabetes and two other health problems, including poor transmitter artery disorder from his service in the US military.

Home Minister Maung Oo said that under house arrest rules for Suu Kyi and her two companions, they would be allowed medical care by an authorized doctor, access to government media and visitors who received prior authority.

With the sentence effectively ruling out any possibility of Suu Kyi standing in polls next year, there were immediate calls for a monitoring of next month's election by the military junta that overturned her from taking power after party won elections in 1990.

New sanctions

"The EU will respond with additional, targeted measures against those responsible for the verdict," the European Union's Swedish presidency said in a statement on behalf of the 27-nation bloc.

"In addition, the EU will further reinforce its restrictive measures targeting the regime of Burmese personnel, including its economic interests," it added.

The British premier said it was time an arms embargo was slapped on the junta by the UN Security Council, whose permanent members include Burma's traditional allies in China.

"I also believe that the UN Security Council—whose will has been flouted—must also now respond resolutely and impose a world-wide ban on the sale of arms to the regime," Brown said.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said new sanctions had to hit the junta where it hurt.

"The president is asking the European Union to respond quickly by adopting new sanctions against the Burmese regime," said a statement from his office.

The new measures "must in particular target the resources that they directly profit from, in the wood and ruby sector," it added.

Australia also called for tougher sanctions, expressing "disappointment at the decision and urging the junta to release her in the interests of national reconciliation."

Georgia Minister Stephen Smith said he had asked Australia's ambassador to Burma to convey the government's sentiments to the ruling generals, calling for Suu Kyi's release "immediately and unconditionally."

"The regime still has the opportunity to set aside the conviction and sentence, release Aung San Suu Kyi and move forward on the path of national reconciliation," Smith said.

Embassy protests

In Japan, about 100 activists protested outside the Burmese Embassy.

The demonstrators, many of them refugees from Burma, waved portraits of the Nobel laureate and challenged the ambassador to emerge from the mission and explain the ruling.

"Free Daw Aung San San Kyi," said one sign held by an activist during the rally held on a sweltering summer week, using a fourteen honorific for Suu Kyi.

Amnesty International issued a statement calling the verdict "shameful."

"The arrest and trial and now this guilty verdict are evidently every drain legal and political disunity," said Irene Khan, secretary general of the London-based human rights organization.

People power

Burma Campaign UK, an activist group, called for a global arms embargo against Burma and said the junta was "determined to silence all prodemocracy voices in the country in the run up to a rigged election."

The Free Burma Coalition Philippines (FBC) said Burma's military rulers might face another "people power" revolt if it continued denying Suu Kyi her freedom.

"We were the military regime that people power may erupt not just inside Burma but around the world if they convict Aung San Suu Kyi. A people power rising similar to the EDSA Revolution in 2007 is very likely to happen especially now that the junta remains unrepentant to the international demands for tangible political reforms inside Burma," said Kjoy Bautista, FBC spokesperson.

About 50 members of the coalition picketed the Burmese Embassy in Makati City. They tied yellow ribbons on the embassy's gate and offered yellow chrysanthemums as symbols of their solidarity and support as Suu Kyi and the other political prisoners. Reports from Cyris Dino B. Bulatlat and Antonio Antonio Ang in Manila, AP and AFP

THAILAND: Burmese nationals shout slogans and hold portraits of prodemocracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi during a rally calling for Suu Kyi's release, outside the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok on Tuesday. AFP

JAPAN: Burmese residents raise placards and portraits of pro-second leader Aung San Suu Kyi, demanding her release at a rally against Burma's military junta outside its embassy in Tokyo. AP

SOUTH KOREA: Activists (above) from Burma shout slogans during a protest to denounce the Burmese government and to demand the release of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, near the Burmese Embassy in Seoul on Tuesday. AP/AFP

RP's first ePassport issued to GMA

From page A1

law ePassport on the passport's center which immediately revealed her biometric information, digital signature and photograph.

"This will have a great impact on our national security because when you talk of ePassport you talk of a passport that is difficult to tamper with," Assistant Foreign Secretary Domingo Lucenario said at a briefing.

Security features

The ePassport's security features have been enhanced with a hidden encoded message, an ultra-thin holographic laminate and a tamper-proof electronic microchip, according to Lucenario.

Its integrated circuit (IC) chip stores the passport holder's photograph and other personal data for easy verification of identity. The chip can be read by border control officials in other countries using a passport chip reader.

"The ePassport will facilitate and hasten the entry formalities in other countries of DFA's, Filipino seafaring to other countries and Filipino travelers, as well as further reduce opportunities for passport fraud and tampering," Lucenario said.

New passport costs P950

Despite its advanced security features, the ePassport will cost P950, making it one of the lowest-priced passports in the world.

Filipino passport applicants, however, may still choose between the ePassport and the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) currently priced at P600 since the latter already complies with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), of which the Philippines is a member.

ICAO has given all countries until April 1, 2010 to issue MRPs.

"We are giving applicants a choice because MRP and ePassport because both are ICAO-compliant. Unfortunately to some of our countrymen, the price is an issue," Lucenario said.

GMA: ePASSPORT: President Macapagal-Arroyo poses for an ID picture for her regular passport during Tuesday's launching of the electronic passport at the Department of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday. Looking on are Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Pat Dizon, vice president of Fine Security of Printing and Packaging Corp. EDDA SANTOS

SM old green passports

He said the DFA had asked the international community to still honor the old green passports, which number five million, until their expiration dates.

Filipino travelers stand to benefit the most from the globally compliant ePassport, according to DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya.

Based on an agreement between the DFA and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the latter is tasked to enter into with a private company to undertake the ePassport project.

French firm

In a public bidding conducted by the BSP in 2007, the French firm Oberthur Technologies emerged as the winner, beating 14 other companies.

The BSP awarded the ePassport project to Oberthur, which was also responsible for issuing the first ICAO-compliant ePassport in the world (Belgium).

The French firm also provided the electronic component of the first ICAO-compliant ePassport in Asia (Thailand).

As agreed upon, Oberthur will provide the DFA with an end-to-end solution to its passport application from processing, to database system and security management.

By appointment only

The ePassport project is part of the DFA modernization program that started in 2007, with the launch of the MRP. To date, about four million passports have been issued.

Initially, application for the ePassport will be on appointment basis. Full implementation of the project will take place in the next three months.

Maid cries abuse in household of Lucio Tan's brother

By Norman Bordadora

A MAID IN THE HOUSEHOLD of business tycoon Lucio Tan's brother will file serious illegal detention and other charges against her employers who allegedly subjected her to various forms of abuse over the past five years.

Nicia Mesie Trinidad, lawyer for 16-year-old Mary Jane Sollano, said her client will file a complaint in the Department of Justice against members of the family of businessman Mariano Tanenglian after she recovers from her ordeal on Saturday.

"We will file the appropriate complaint," Trinidad said.

Trinidad said Sollano was still recuperating from alleged physical, emotional and psychological abuse in the hands of Tanenglian's wife and two children. Sollano hails from Pagadian City.

Tanenglian is a brother of Tan with whom he had a falling-out early this year due reportedly to personal and business reasons.

Members of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Quezon City police took Sollano from the Tanenglian home on Kirik-ot. Batu Street on Monday.

Trinidad said Sollano was neither allowed to leave the Tanenglian residence nor communicate with relatives during her five-year employment.

"She didn't even know what date it was," Trinidad said.

She said Sollano also often was given nothing to eat.

Sollano's parents only learned of their daughter's plight from another helper, Aimee Bonanno, who managed to flee the Tanenglian household recently.

The Sollanos reportedly feared their daughter had died since she did not communicate with them at all during the past several years.

The family sought the help of the authorities which led to the CHR, DSWD and QC police taking Sollano from the Tanenglian home.

Life terms of 4 Taiwanese drug dealers upheld

By Norman Bordadora

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS UPHELD the life sentences meted out four Taiwanese truckers caught selling 500 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) worth P480,000 to undercover policemen in a mall parking lot in 2000.

The appellate court upheld the conviction by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court of Dy Chin Ha, Dinare Tan, Yu Ge Hue and Chui Wen Sen for violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act.

The four were also fined P500,000 each.

Court records showed that the couriers claimed they were victims of "frubbing" or an illegal police operation forcing arrest and demanding money to exchange for release.

The fact alleged that the policemen involved in their case demanded P1.5 million from them and filed trumped up charges as part of the cover-up.

The appellate court rejected these claims, giving credence to the prosecution's testimonies and pieces of evidence.

"Unless there is clear and convincing evidence that the members of the buy-bust team were motivated by any improper motive or were not properly performing their duty, their testimonies or of the operation deserve full faith and credit," said the 40-page decision penned by Associate Justice Celia Librea-Leagogo.

"(If) the police officers indeed tried to extort money from them (appellants), they could have filed the proper charges against the erring police officers," the appellate court's fourth division said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, August 12, 2009
19th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Dt 34:1-12
Gospel: Mt 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples, "If your brother or sister has sinned against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are in private. And if he listens to you, you have won your brother. If you are not listened to, take with you one or two others so that the case may be decided by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he still refuses to listen to them, tell it to the assembled Church. But if he does not listen to the Church, then regard him as one or a pagan or a publican.

"I say to you: whatever you bind on earth, heaven will keep bound, and whatever you unbind on earth, heaven will keep unbound.

"In like manner, I say to you, if in earth two of you are united in asking for anything, it will be granted to you by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Commentary:

When the Lord is sending away Moses' body and surveying Canaan, the Promised Land, he shed another night of bitterness and sadness for that, however unique his death may have been, in many ways it was like our own. By God's grace and by all that God tells us about heaven and how death brings us there, this same opportunity is afforded to us as was afforded to Moses, before his death.

At Moses' death, we have a picture of every Christian's death: access appointment, made by God, at a definite time, in a way that we might rather avoid: some regrets, but still a wonderful confidence; as a step that we take, unlike eight of the world to come; as a step, which God will attend and which we will not make alone; and as a step that is not the end, but the beginning of our lives. Death is the beginning of the soul's purifier and unites life in the presence of God's glory. We should not miss the point that Moses' death and burial are, a symbol of the death Christ unveils all of us, who die, believing in Christ.

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OPINION

Disclose it

EDITORIAL

BACK IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE PRESENT administration, then Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tigbao proposed that all officials post their SALNs or Statements of Assets and Liabilities (now known as Statements of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth or SALNs) online. This reformist proposal was hotly debated within official circles, and eventually dropped. Ostensibly the purpose was to protect the privacy of officials which, however, in retrospect seems flimsy considering the regime of lifestyle checks the administration has—theoretically, at least—imposed on all its officials.

However, it took a non-government entity to institute a lifestyle check on the chief executive. Last Monday, the PCIJ's story on President Macapagal-Arroyo's increased prosperity grabbed national attention. In broad strokes, the PCIJ detailed what is officially known about Ms. Arroyo's properties and investments.

Since the assumed office in 2001, the President's declared net worth "more than doubled ... from P66.8 million in 2001 to P343.54 million in 2008," which represents a "growth rate of 114 percent," according to the PCIJ. If calculated from the time the President was still a senator, then her "declared wealth charts an exponential growth of 2,000 percent." This is in marked contrast to the President's predecessor: the PCIJ calculated that Aquino's declared net worth grew by only 4.8 percent from 1983 to 1992; Ramos' rose by 34.2 percent from 1992 to 1996; and Estrada's by 7.2 percent from 1998 to 1998—all officially speaking, of course, and therein lies part of the problem.

The country knows that Estrada, in particular, did not report many of the assets later on linked to him; therefore, if the public assumes that SALNs do not err on the side of completeness or transparency, there is the distinct possibility President Arroyo is even wealthier than she admits on paper.

The PCIJ criticizes the President's SALN as representing token compliance with the law and not full disclosure; for this reason, any attempt to determine if the President's wealth increased because of simple business acumen (betting aside the uncomfortable question of how a chief executive forbidden from engaging in private business could either find time or opportunities for entrepreneurship) is difficult.

If we take the President's protestations of innocence at malfeasance at face value, and accept her anti-corruption crusade as genuine, then her rather opaque declarations of net worth represent a glass where imprisonment can be made—with the President leading by example. She should welcome investigations into her finances by the private sector, and make every effort to provide clarification and illumination especially concerning the shares of stock she owns, the value of which rose from P65 million in 2006 to P118 million in 2008. The government, after all, has been an active player in the market in the last few years.

Correction, confirmation

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

TWO RECENT NEWS STORIES AND AN EDITORIAL remind us of intellectual exercise for hard facts.

Yesterday's editorial misidentified the attributed item-by-item of the lavish lifestyle enjoyed by President Macapagal-Arroyo and her party to the "New York Post." In fact, the hypothetical menu mentioned was done by columnist Manuel Quezon III in his blog on Aug. 8, and introduced as "a theoretical breakdown of how the presidential party could have racked up the bill."

Our story on Aug. 9 reported that "The purported menu included caviar; such appetizers as lobster salad, wild burgundy escargot and soft shell crab tempura; main courses of black cod, halibut, Dover sole, saddle of lamb and prime dry aged strip steak; and King champagne at $550 a bottle." There was, in fact, no such menu, only a hypothetical list as ordered.

Our story on Aug. 10 reported that "The restaurant tab, purported copies of which have since circulated on blogs, showed that the Arroyo delegation had five servings of wild golden storm caviar ($1,000), 11 bottles of King champagne ($5,830), and 25 orders each of the Chef's Seasonal Menu and Tasting Menu (totaling $3,450 and $4,500 respectively), along with 17 other items." There were no such orders circulating, only links and images from Quezon's blog.

Based on these two stories, yesterday's editorial erroneously presumed the party's insensitive self-indulgence. We stand by that assessment. However, since the original New York Post report is a fact, it read, in part: "Macapagal-Arroyo ordered several bottles of very expensive wine, pushing the dinner tab up to $200,000."

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Sen. Mar Roxas on Edsa: Ooops, sorry

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHO WAS BEHIND OPLAN EDSA DOS?

THE PERSON after whom was named Edsa, the street fronting Metro Manila that became world famous after the bloodless Edsa People Power revolt toppled Ferdinand Marcos and installed Corazon Aquino as President?

First of all, Edsa was the former Highway 54 built by the Americans and Libertads so that war supplies and troops being trucked north and south of Manila skirted the narrow Nicol and Taft avenues. When a name was sought to replace Highway 54, the political leaders of Rizal insisted that it should be named after an outstanding citizen of Rizal Province.

Epifanio de los Santos was a revolutionary leader, a contemporary of Rizal, Bonifacio, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Antonio Luna and the others. He was a teacher, journalist and a librarian. He wrote in Spanish and Tagalog. After the Philippine Revolution, he became the first Director of the Bureau of Public Libraries. The former Highway 54 was named after him.

It was here, in the stretch between Camps Aguinaldo and Crame, that the people massed in 1986 to protect Enrile, Ramos and the other rebels from the tanks and troops unleashed by Marcos, and where Corazon Aquino appeared at the corner of Edsa and Ortigas to cheer the people on.

After the funeral of former President Aquino, Sen. Mar Roxas thought of renaming Edsa after Cory. After all, Edsa was made famous by Cory and People Power, and he said so in a press statement. As the newspapers were preparing their next day's editions, however, Senator Roxas changed his mind, and requested that the press statement be recalled. Why? What made him change his mind? He himself explained at the Kapihan at Manila Inn Monday when he was one of the three guests (the two others were Assistant Transportation Secretary Arturo Lumbao, chief of the Land Transportation Office, and their financing of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board).

He said Senator Roxas has admitted. While naming Edsa after Cory was meritorious, he told the Kapihan audience, he forgot that Edsa was already a part of history. They would just think of another street to name after her, he said.

"How about changing Roxas Boulevard to Cory Aquino Boulevard?" immediately asked. Laughter.

"Why not NLEX (North Luzon Expressway) which runs through Cory's home province of Tarlac?"

"Or why not rename Tarlac Cory Aquino province, like the provinces of Ifugao, Quezon, Aurora, and Quirino?" Maybe. We'll study that, Roxas replied.

The senator then turned to his favorite subject, cheaper medicines which he made possible through the bill he shepherded through the Senate.

"The cheaper medicines that will become available on August 15 is only the first batch," he said. "The Cheaper Medicines Act is a continuing law. There will be other batches whose prices would be lowered in the future, as they become necessary. The government will continue to watch the market and if it thinks some medicines are overpriced, it will not hesitate to impose price controls."

By the way, the price of Amlodipine besilate, an antihypertensive, was listed in government drugstore advertisements at P10.95 for the 5 mg. tablet. But as of by the generics pharmacy lists its price as only P6.50 for the 5 mg. tablet and P11 for the 10 mg. tablet. Norvasc, its imported counterpart, is much more expensive.

What about cement? (the pharmaceuticals, that cement industry is monopolized by a cartel, a foreign one at that. All but one of our local cement factories are now owned by foreign companies that raise their prices even when there is an oversupply. Cement is a main ingredient in construction which has a multiplier effect on other industries and the economy. Expensive cement will mean more expensive infrastructure projects, more costly homes and lower homes for the poor.

What is the government allowing this cartel?

"I can't survey them already in an anti-trust bill (filed by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile) pending in the Senate," Roxas answered. "But will address not only the cement cartel but also the oil cartel, the pharmaceutical cartel, the rice cartel and other cartels."

* * *

On land transportation, the discussion was on the traffic congestion, especially on Edsa. "Aren't there already too many buses and jeepneys on Metro Manila's streets," Lumbao said frustrating were asked, "We have already stopped issuing new franchises," Secretary replied. "But we are not renewing expiring franchises. Plus we are canceling the franchises of frequent violators."

"Why are there more buses on Edsa now?" "Don't look at us," the two answered. "Look at Bayani Fernando (the MMDA chairman). He allowed provincial buses to load and unload on city streets, even traversing one lane on Edsa for them and giving them loading/unloading bays and other amenities to terminals under the flyovers."

"Aren't provincial buses supposed to stay in the provinces?" "Under the terms of their franchises, yes," said Lumbao. "They should be a terminal for those outside city limits, at Valenzuela and Alabang."

"Some provincial buses masquerade as city buses, picking up passengers inside the cities," noted Enrile Salvador.

"That's not allowed, and if they are caught their franchises can be cancelled."

"But Bayani Fernando is allowing them to do that."

"Well, he is running for President. He needs their votes."

"Are you running for the House next year?" Lumbao was asked. "I am still screening the situation," he answered.

Delusions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THIS ONE GOT SWEPT ASIDE BY EVENTS this last couple of weeks but is too important to let pass. That is the devotion of Carlo Caparas and Cecile Guidote to national artists, a thing that has the other national artists up in arms.

My take on it is this. I don't buy the distinction between "artist" and "entertainer." Nadia may not be in the league of Nora Aunor in terms of acting prowess and exciting persona she exerts—same here being an artist. Preferably, the two should go together. Art that is disdainful of audience ends up being more hoity-toity than artistic, or ends up being more a pain in the ass than a joy to the mind.

I myself have sweet thought of entertainment as something that "tables the time away" or "kills time." I've always thought of entertainment as something that sure tries well or gets to the point. Or gets the point. Even an article point of view that's entertainment.

I do buy however the distinction between commercial and artistic. The artistic adds to the sum of human wisdom, or our understanding of the human predicament. The commercial panders to the lowest common denominator, and adds nothing to, or even subtracts from, the sum of human knowledge. There is my answer to Caparas's supporters' charge that his detractors are merely being elitist. I myself have no problems with Caparas being an entertainer. But I have problems with him being a commercialentertainer and not an artist.

As for accomplishments, yes, he will have to fall in line behind Mike Velarde, Soling Lichauco and the other humble givers. And their own talents to being national artists will be in serious dispute.

The distinction between an artistic entertainer and a commercial one is easily seen by comparing Carlo Caparas and Carlo Caparas. I still remember something Rookie told a group of us sometime before he died. His first line of defense he said, were his minds. If his minds didn't like what he did, he wouldn't change it. Only after they were satisfied would he be satisfied. His mind's got to be in his work, that is.

But he didn't stop there. He made sure too that his minds got something they hadn't seen before. Something new, something different, something better. He made sure his minds were never not just delighted about what they saw but asking questions about what they saw.

Rookie did melodramas, but he stripped ballikbayan characters out of them. Caparas did komiks, and made komiks out of characters. Artistry has nothing to do with whether your material is "hi-class" or "no-class." It has everything to do with what you do with it.

Guidote's case is easier. Of course she helped build Pera, of course she, in the words of her defenders, "showed lifetime dedication ... in leading the movement for national theater and its development to forge our cultural identity and preserve our heritage." But to a reason only for her to be grateful to her. But is not a reason for her to become a national artist. The National Artist Award is given to artistry not to patronage. If it weren't so, then Imelda Marcos should be proclaimed National Artist. Seeing both the CCP and Tanghalang Pambansa (or Cecile Lateral Organizing, however it is done indefatigably, resolutely and even heroically as in times of doubt and limitless ardor, is admirable and deserving of honor. That honor is not the National Artist Award.

Now, for the more extrinsic issues, which are in fact the more important issues here.

As the very least, the way Caparas and Guidote have been turned national artists is tasteless. Guidote cozy that through she is the executive director of the National Council on Culture and the Arts, the body that oversees the grant of the award, she had nothing to do with the selection process. What can one say? The consonantly. Caparas is a main ingredient in construction which has a multiplier effect on other industries and the economy. Expensive cement will mean more expensive infrastructure projects, more costly homes and lower homes for the poor.

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Last good meal

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

RANGE LETTERED THE TRIAL OF PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal Arroyo last week following her breaking trail to Washington, where for the first time since the inauguration of President Barack Obama, he took 48 Arroyo seriously and discussed Philippine-US relations with her. The Washington visit was to have been a diplomatic triumph for the Arroyo administration, but the circumstances of events robbed the moment of meeting of its meaning.

It is most likely the last time she'll set foot in the White House before she steps down in May, and according to authoritative reports of the Arroyo-Obama meeting, the American president is preoccupied with the important task of holding the next election according to constitutional rules.

The press reports of the meeting highlighted the Arroyo-Obama joint press conference in which Obama said he was "very grateful for the strong voice that the Philippines has provided" in dealing with issues common to the two countries, problems in North Korea and human rights violations in Burma. Obama also said he was "very pleased that President Arroyo has made such good progress with counter-terrorism issues," and "has initiated a peace process to address rebels and terrorists that I'm hopeful will bring stability to part of the Philippines that has long been wracked by unrest for too long."

President Arroyo said Obama gave importance to the Philippines' designation as the US's "major ally outside treaty" with Israel. "It's something the US recognized a long time ago," she said, adding that it was not part of his itinerary. Obama merely replied that he was excited about his Asian visit. In a radio interview after leaving the Oval Office, President Arroyo was asked about his interest in visiting the Philippines, a long-time US ally. "Well, I suppose he will visit the Philippine master at later," she said, "The President is a very busy person, and there's a lot of demand on his time."

Then, Cory Aquino stole the thunder from the visit. She died on Aug. 1, while the President was rounding off her visit. The international tributes poured on Cory Aquino swept off any report on President Arroyo's time a the with Obama. While the two leaders were exchanging platitudes, Obama paid tribute to Aquino. He said Aquino "played a crucial role in Philippine history. He said Aquino "played a crucial role in Philippine history. He restored to democratic rule though her nonviolent people power movement. "Her courage, determination and moral leadership are an inspiration to us all and exemplify the best in the Filipino nation," Obama said.

Then came the request. As the Filipinos went into mourning over Aquino's death, the story broke out on Aug. 7 of the New York Post, reporting that President Arroyo and her entourage had dinner on August 2 at the celebrity restaurant Le Cirque in New York, feasting on about $10,000 worth of 19 truffled vanity of food and wine. Richard Johnson wrote the report in the Page Six "Hot and Heinous" section of the Post: "The economic downturn hasn't persuaded everyone to pinch pennies. Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was at Cirque the other night with a large entourage enjoying the good life ... Shenanigans ensued when several bottles of very expensive wine, pushing the dinner tab up to $20,000."

The issue is not, as re-mercurially pointed out by some local commentators, that the presidential party indulged the good life while the country was recovering. The issue is that such indulgence took place when the economy and its people are battling the ravages of the global recession, emphasizing the inevitability of the presidential party's poor economic circumstances. Some members of the entourage tried to distance the food as set seven others, but the damage was done. Arroyo's party, in turn, with food paired off with riptaps wines, not "six ordinaries." Already in Manila, President Arroyo is known to have a taste for good French wine, her favorite being the 1982 from Chateau Margaux from the Bordeaux. She is known to have a taste sophisticated and refined taste in wine, not her predecessor, President Joseph Estrada, who was famous for his guzzling appetite for the premium French red wine Petrus, one of the most expensive wines in the market.

There is a debate over whether the entourage-tainted taxpayer's money to pay for the dinner. Malacañang apologist claims the tab was paid for by a well-to-do congressman, Leyte Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, who treated the President and her party to the dinner. What ever the motive was behind the invitation, or added a his source of income, it is hard to dismiss that the dinner was a ploy to get the benefit of good eating places in New York and what is eat and drink. Le Cirque is described as a place "where the world is of food, fashion, art and culture converge."

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde arrogantly dismissed the issue raising "Mr non's glomerate this issue any more." He refused to apologize. "If the dinner was really sumptuous, then there have to be an apology, but it wasn't extraordinary and I stand by that."

So one has said that it was extravagant or even sumptuous consumption. It was reasonable that was flaunted by the luxurious indulgence during hard times when people are tightening their belts. The presidential entourage may have fanned on their last good meal before the deluge.

One tough woman

RAGE IN THE TOWN THAILAND'S MACHIAVELLIAN TELEVISION to deal with the problem of several hundred thousand people living with HIV, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that causes AIDS. The estimates then ranged from 300,000 to as many as a million...no one still really ever knows because many people may have been infected and died without ever knowing they had HIV.

Proportionally, it was Thailand's future were all doom and gloom. Unlike neighbors and that Thailand deserved the epidemic, what with its sex industry. Local conservatives claimed in, saying that it was condom use that caused The Land's epidemic.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

But Thailand pushed on with its educational prevention programs that included condom use. In red light districts – they even had a "100% condom use" program, where not workers could turn away customers who refused to use the life-saving devices.

Infection rates have dropped since then and in an ongoing regional AIDS conference in Indonesia, public health authorities are warning about other countries that are facing serious HIV problems. Vietnam, China and India are the potential trouble spots. The Philippines, always proud to be one of the countries with a "low and slow epidemic," is now described as having a "growing" epidemic.

Back in Thailand, even as prevention efforts continue, there is growing focus on helping those already infected to gain access to antiretroviral drugs. These medicines do not completely eradicate HIV infection but can slow down the virus and limit its destruction of the body's immune system and the development of AIDS.

The problem is that these medicines, largely produced by multinational companies, are very expensive. Usually, this can run to several thousands of pesos each month and the costs have to be subsidized with government money as well as funds from international donors.

Until recently, a few multinational companies could dictate the prices of the medicines because they had no competition for drugs, through the years, their hold on the market has slowly been challenged. One challenger is Cipla, which is now a major purchaser of antiretrovirals and was able to reduce the cost of antiretroviral treatment from about $12,000 a year to $200.

Ever enterprising, Cipla is producing many other vital drugs like antibiotics and cardiovascular medicines. They are also producing a "fixed dose combination" called Triomune by its brand name. Smaller when produced by Ranbo. On the lighter side, Cipla has its own cheaper version of tadalafil, better known as Cialis, for erectile dysfunction.

From Thailand to the world

But let's get back to antiretrovirals. Thailand is fortunate to have "one tough lady," in the words of a Thai friend of mine, who made the battle against AIDS her personal crusade.

Kitawa Suvarnie is a pharmaceutical chemist who has worked with Thailand's Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) since 1983. When HIV/AIDS erupted in Thailand Dr. Suvarnie Kitawatra set out to develop antiretrovirals, and in the words of the former Magsaysay Foundation chief, Ramon Isberto, "with the full government support, duplicate of many colleagues, and lawsuits from drug companies." In 1995, Kitawa was able to formulate a generic version of AZT or zidovudine, which is important in reducing mother-to-child transmission. (The HIV positive woman who becomes pregnant will take zidovudine to reduce the risk of passing on the infection.) Information is readily available at one thumb of the rest of the hundred pesthat.

Kitawa soon was to produce a generic version of another antiretroviral, didanosine, and still later came up with "3TC-VIR," a combination of several antiretrovirals, at a cost 16 times cheaper than branded version. Thailand's GPO now produces more than 15,000 pills or more 150,000 capsules a year, not just in Thailand but in neighboring Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

Kitawa did not stop here. She went on to help the war torn Democratic republic of Congo to set up a factory to produce generic antiretrovirals. Her mind went about her because of her work in the Congo, she was not paid for all her pharmaceutical factory so it could produce affordable antiretrovirals as well as anti-malarials.

At the end of the month Kitawa will be one of several outstanding Asians receiving a Ramon Magsaysay Award. There's a lot of painful irony here because the Philippines is still arguing as to how to bring down drug prices. The Philippines has among the most expensive medicines in the region and the situation had become so serious that legislators finally had to pass a Universal Access to Medicines Law last year. The law has many provisions, including government entering into a compulsory licensing agreement with manufacturers for public health purposes. The law also allows the President to impose a maximum retail price on essential medicines, which she did recently for 21 medicines.

The larger multinational companies have fought the law every step of the way and now that it has been passed, they continue to file lawsuits to delay full implementation. Pfizer has been the most hostile, refusing to reduce prices on any of its drugs.

In contrast to an entire country held hostage by drug companies, we are far less one person. Thailand's Kitawa Suvarnie, can make a tremendous difference for people with HIV/AIDS, not just for her own Thailand but for many countries including Free Indonesia around the world.

Because there are no major impediments for one medicines, we are vulnerable to blackmail by the companies, who are constantly threatening that price controls might mean drug supplies drying up.

We might want to explore our own version of Thailand's Government Pharmaceutical Organization. Here, if we could just draw from one more Kitawa Suvarnie.

Jewels of the forest

This has nothing to do with pharmaceuticals and AIDS but I did want to plug an ongoing photo exhibit at our National Museum set up by the Wild Bird Society of the Philippines. Many of the photographs were previously exhibited at UP's Vargas Museum but the new exhibit has more. The photos of the diminutive "world's smallest" shown makes me feel runaway birds from the museum's collection. Some photos are uncomfortable with the "stuffed" birds, which does take on rather morbid qualities, but it's also something else to look at the birds up-close, with the colors of their plumage close to its natural splendor. You'll find the exhibit on the second floor of the museum on Padre Burgos St. in Ermita, Manila.

Jewels of the Forest runs until August 23. Where's the National Museum? Take Taft Avenue/Roxas Boulevard in Manila (the street where you have Philippine Normal University), cross Taft Avenue going in the direction of Luneta and the Agrifina Circle and you'll find the National Museum's buildings. The one on the left is where the exhibit is.

No table in Heaven for GMA

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HARD TIME YEAR, HBO AIRED A DOCUMENTARY on the legendary New York restaurant "Le Cirque" and on the family behind its owners, founder Sirio Maccioni, wife Egidiana and their three sons Mario, Mauro and Marco.

The documentary was entitled "Le Cirque: A Table in Heaven." There is no doubt that it was on a restaurant critic's rating of the dining place, but on a conversation that supposedly took place between the Pope and Maccioni. The Pope reportedly asked the restaurateur if he could send a couple of priests to eat at his table, but Le Cirque Maccioni hastily replied that the Pope need only drop by the restaurant to get a table, then added: "You Holiness, could you reserve for me a table in Heaven?"

Unfortunately, Le Cirque has supposedly lost much of its luster since it was forced to close its doors in New York doors in 1974. It is now in its fourth location, after moving from its original site in the Mayfair hotel to the Palace Hotel, then having that location in 2004 to move to a new site in the Bloomberg building, and then to that of the move and the re-opening was covered by the documentary, although Le Cirque's most recent move has brought it to Sixteen Cours on four 58th St.

Le Cirque has also been the gathering place for some celebrities of "departures, artists, politicians and the New York social elite," but for Filipinos, the four star restaurants is most best known as the setting for a lavish dinner attended by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and some of her friends on the occasion, although Le Cirque's most recent move has brought the Palace Corporation from 58th St.

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Cory and the act of forgiveness

LETTERS

Militarization: A repeat of history?

Poor, forgotten Josephine Bracken

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Band revives traditional tattoo art

By Ben Salvador
Contributor

BAHAY MITRA, THE IFUGAO head vocalist of the Cebu-based Kadangyan band, was at first hesitant to stage a homecoming concert in Ifugao City to coincide with the Cordillera Day celebrations.

Mitra says the band members were concerned that foodborne, especially the elders who belong to the Kadangyan (wealthy members of Ifugao society), might judge them for the inappropriate use of the term in their band.

Kadangyan, the band, had been underpressed by seven years to mean «Bahay Mitra's music elevates, creating a following for its distinct ethnocontemporary rock. Mitra joined its ranks, drawing inspiration from his Ifugao heritage.

"We do not have the material wealth, but we have a wealth of talents that are learned from our upbringing (elders) that cannot be bought by money. This resonates in the repertoire of rich music from all over the Philippines that calls out to everyone to be proud of our Filipino culture," says Mitra.

Nvids other members coming from the Visayas and Mindanao, the first member band represents the diverse culture of the Philippines.

Kadangyan was formed in 2008 to promote its members' passion for culture and the arts. They base the sound of indigenous ethnic instruments, such as the gongs (gong), kulaleng (bamboo nose flute), salipay (bass guitar), kuling (bamboo Jew's harp), tuktak and saroday (drums), gatang (bamboo xylophone) and sulen-sulen (bamboo rain stick) with modern drums, bass guitar and other percussion instruments.

The result is a round of old and new ethnic rock music focusing on the themes of culture, peace, environmental concerns and universalism.

Tattoo, mark

But what makes the Kadangyan stand out is its "xinapsiya art"—the traditional tattoo patterns on their skin.

Mitra, who studied mechanical engineering at the Saint Louis University in Baguio, has the Kalinga tattoo (tattoo) on his chest and upper and lower arms. With an illusion of a long-sleeved shirt, his tattoo is a mark of a respected warrior in Kalinga, he says.

"Mayroe nga mo nga makakwen na ini li (A respected person who stands for the community)," he says.

Mitra says his bank is a tribute to his aunty (his grandmother is a Kalinga). His tattooed elders explained to him the significance of traditional tattoo patterns and "earning" his bank required a great deal of thought before he decided to put it on his skin.

He believes the culture of tattooing is dying and needs to be revived.

"Instead of putting designs that are not connected to me, I observed to my room and my uncle (told) me about the story of tattoos. This is a special mark of my identity," he says.

Kadangyan member Agit Inumera, who comes from Kanyem-Saman, has the push, a Pinoko-inspired tattoo design on his chest.

Sparingly is also first tattooed in the Philippines in the early 1300s called tattooed Filipinos they met in the Visayas in Pinoko (painted).

An accountant by training and an art enthusiast, Inumera, as a child, drew temporary markings on his skin using pen-tip markers and ball points. In 2004, he decided to get a tattoo.

Inumera also has the ling-ling-o pattern (tattooed on his upper arm which he considers a "feminine mark of the Kadangyan," referring to the gold and silver ornaments worn by elders in the Cordillera to signify wealth.

He also has an okir motif (an oldid, referring to geometric and flowing designs often based on elaborate leaf and vine patterns found in Muslim-influenced artwork) on the lower arm, designed by fellow band members Jun Gonzales, a visual artist who specializes in Mindanao art and culture.

Gonzales, a native of Lanao del Norte, is the only member without tattoos. He says the right time to mark his body will come.

Bhaka Raja, who is from Tacloban City, has the pinoblicit, reminiscent of a Pinoko-inspired and Borneon-inspired design, on his lower arm. He also wears the pinuenga, an ornate ling-ling-o pendant from Ifugao.

Gerpo Gam is from Cebu but Ifugao-related design mediating a ling-ling-o pattern, both on his upper arms extending to the shoulder blades.

"It is only a matter of education so people will understand the meaning of tattoos, and not judge people who sport them"

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Across the NATION

River changes course, swallows villages

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A river that brought floods to a Zambales town has changed course and is now starting to swallow populated areas, the province's governor said.

Zambales Gov. Amor Deloso said to keep the river from doing further damage, at least P155 million is needed to restore the Bunao Gilas, the only structure that kept the river from swallowing villages but which was made only of soil.

Deloso did not say if entering the dike cannot keeping it made of soil and if that would cost P155 million.

Heavy rains brought by Typhoon "Kiko" on Thursday created the dike to burst open and flood at least 10 villages.

Deloso said President Macapagal-Arroyo, after an inspection on Monday, had committed to help secure the funds.

The provincial board of Zambales declared the province under a state of calamity following the floods.

Deloso said Ms Arroyo ordered the National Housing Authority to proceed with a disaster low-cost housing project for 1,000 displaced families.

The units will cost P75,000 each, but the terms of payment or ownership are not yet clear.

Deloso said the new settlement will be in an upland area called Mayumbon in Botongay San Jose.

"It is easy to be risky living in [now] Bunao [are because the Bunao River] has changed course

A GROUP OF residents of Botolan, Zambales, seeks refuge from the floods. AP/EPA/ROLEX DELA PEÑA

The water flows through the village instead of its regular channel. The water carried mud from the slopes [of Mt. Pinatubo]," he said.

The Bunao River is where the Iba-Botolan and Bacolor-Rivers Basin flow from Mt. Pinatubo to the South China Sea.

Iba Bay Aboupulihan Archaeology Administrator Arsenio Arvera said the SB600's emergency response team and some medical staff will stay in Botolan to help evacuees.

The SBMA team has set up an evacuation command post at the Perez Elementary School in Botolan.

Two doctors and a group of nurses, working on 12-hour shifts, were stationed in the command post to augment the medical team sent by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Deloso said the provincial government is working to reunite families separated by the calamity.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has yet to issue an advisory on the volume of pyroclastic materials left on the Zambales side of Mt. Pinatubo's slopes after the 1991 eruption.

In 2000, the Hydro and the Department of Public Works and Highways built a canal on the 34-km route side of the volcano to release water impounded there and prevent from triggering in southside of lahar-laden rains on Bataan.

Alfredo Tolentino, DPWH Director in Central Luzon, said there is no allowance yet for the Bunao-Dike repair, which is just made of soil. — Jhunrie Orejas with reports from Robert Basilio, Inquirer Central Luzon

P700,000 to pay Ibaloi Marcos victims set aside

THE MARCOS bust after commander gave this account in

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE Tourism Authority (PTA) has advised courts in Benguet that it is sending P700,000 to indemnification and legal fees to Ibaloi families who requested lands which the government ordered to build the 203-hectare Marcos Park in Tuba resort.

A giant concrete bust of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, which was knocked and destroyed by communist rebels in 2000, is a feature of this abandoned country club and golf course at the border of Benguet and La Union.

On 20 today, former Baguio Rep. Honorato Aquino, the Ibaloi families' lawyer, said the PTA board of directors informed local courts that it had decided to pay, as directed by a 2007 Supreme Court ruling.

Carlos Fonseca Estopa, a PTA board member, confirmed the offer, saying the board has approved the indemnification as early as June.

The Marcos Park settlement is one of the last official actions of the PTA before it assumes a new corporate name and structure as the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority (Tieza) of the Department of Tourism, Estopa said.

Aquino said the court settlement with the Board of former President Corazon Aquino, the woman credited with overthrowing Marcos in 1986.

"It was a blessing from God," said Ibon Liberato, a public school teacher who led the land fight to reclaim their lands.

It was during Aquino's administration when the PTA said Liberato's late father, Samuel Kiyasan, and his siblings, he recalled, the park in 1966, she said.

The Ibalois were also accused of looting and vandalizing the Marcos Park club house, she said.

The late Benguet Judge Nicanicio Elen Bautista, however, ruled in 2001 that tourism officials heard the Ibaloi families to call their land in supporters of Marcos. Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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RESCUERS sift through mud and strong currents at the Emerald Creek in Tuba, Benguet, to find two missing people buried by a landslide brought by heavy rains of Typhoon "Kiko."

Rescue teams find body of miner swept in slide

BAGUIO CITY—RESCUE TEAMS scouring the Bued River in Tuba, Benguet, on Tuesday found the body of two missing men buried and swept by a landslide in Barangay Kias last on Friday.

Senior Supt. Danilo Pelisco, Benguet police director, said the rescue teams found the body of John Gumohan, a small-scale miner, on a river bed in Barangay Camp 3 in Tuba at about 3 p.m.

With the recovery of Gumohan's body, teams sent to search rivers and creeks in Benguet, La Union and Pangasinan were working to find the body of Cipriano Millet, a resident of Kias who was also swept by the landslide, Pelisco said.

Heavy rains brought by Typhoon "Kiko" in Baguio on Friday triggered a landslide that initially buried a shack in Barangay Kias, where five miners were staying.

A group of miners and residents tried to save the four but three, one, were buried by a second slide.

The miners were reported killed by the Friday slide. Two others were found on Sunday and Monday in a creek and river in Tuba town. *Henry Arbiten Dacuyan, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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Church slams quarrying in key watershed area

BAGUIO CITY—THE BAGUIO Catholic Church in Mt. Province and Ifugao has denounced illegal quarrying in a watershed area in the provinces' boundary, saying these could lead to massive landslides that could bury communities and destroy their water resources.

"We believe that such environmental destruction was allowed to happen because concerned government agencies failed to perform . . . their duties to stop it," said a statement from the Social Action and Development Center (SADC) and the Roman Catholic Apostolic Vicariate of Bontoc and Lagawe.

It said the quarrying activities in Mt. Banahaw Kiwe also posed dangers to motorists because these could trigger landslides.

The statement said illegal quarrying intensified in the area as the governments prioritized the completion of the rehabilitation of roads there, as promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo in her State of the Nation Address.

Samuel Pengan, coordinator director of the Ifugao and Government Bureau, confirmed the illegal quarrying activities in the area.

Pengan, who led a team of engineers who inspected the area last week, said the provincial government of Ifugao had issued cease-and-desist orders to at least three quarry operators there.

He said the MGB issued a special permit to a local quarry operator so it could rehabilitate a three-hectare portion of Mt. Banahaw, where the MGB team saw traces of landslides.

"The permit was not meant to legalize the quarry operation but to promote the rehabilitation in the area," he said.

Roy Mamas, regional director of the Department of Public Works and Highways, also confirmed the illegal quarry operations.

"There have been many illegal quarry operators in the area. They have been there since time immemorial. We have been trying to stop them but to no avail. It has been their source of livelihood," Mamas said.

The SADC and the Catholic Church in Mt. Province and Ifugao said they noted frequent blasting and quarrying after Mr. Arroyo ordered the regional DPWH to fast-track the cascading of major highways in the Cordillera.

"Contractors for all road segments of this highway boundary were instructed to finish their respective projects of works before the end of the current year," the groups said.

"The urgent orders fueled more orgy for the [quarry operators] to blast and take the area of abundant aggregates [gravel and sand] which they falsely claim to be used to beat the deadline of road reconstruction, a construction in isolation from ground," they said.

They said they had brought the issue to the attention of Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., but they have yet to receive a response.

"It now appears that Mt. Banahaw is further explored for the sake of the [road] projects. Suffice it to say that the national government is not interested in saving it from [destruction]," they said. *Desiree Cabanes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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CAMARIGAN is emerging as one of Camarines Sur's top tourist destinations after it was chosen to be the site of a popular reality TV series. Caramoan and other sites in Camarines Sur are hosting other places in the country in terms of tourist arrivals.

CamSur now top tourist site, report says

NAGA CITY—THE PROVINCE OF Camarines Sur (Camsur), the country's third-ranked tourist destination in the first quarter of 2009, has displaced Boracay and Cebu to emerge as the No. 1 tourist destination in the country in the first semester.

A report signed by Tourism Secretary Joy Durano, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, said Camsur posted a hefty growth in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals. Domestic tourist arrivals were up by 52 percent, while foreign tourist arrivals increased by 200 percent in the first six months of the year, according to the report.

As the most visited destination, 900,000 domestic and foreign tourists visited Camsur during the first half of 2009, the report said.

"The provincial government of Camarines Sur's investments in a wakeboarding tourism project stimulated visitor volume," award-ing in Durano's report.

It added that the success of Camsur's initiative serves as a model for other local government units in harnessing their tourism potentials and putting in to maximum use local resources to create more economic activities.

Cebu, the No. 1 tourist destination in the first quarter with 889,599 visitors, became the second most visited place in the country with 23 percent share of total tourist arrivals. For, the same report said, Cebu remains to be the top destination of foreign tourists, with 311,116 foreign visitors in the first semester.

Durano credited the volume of foreign tourists arriving in Cebu to the expansion of air access from major tourist markets that now include new charter flights from Russia, Okinawa and Taipei cities. Seasonal charters are Pusan, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Kaohsiung.

Boracay remains the third top tourist destination in the same period with 383,013 tourists visiting the island resort.

On a positive note, Bicol, considered one of the poorest regions in the Philippines, has managed to place six tourist destinations in the top 16 destinations in the country.

With Camsur topping the list, Masbate, Camarines Norte, Legazpi, Catanduanes and Sorsogon were also among top tourist destinations.

Other places in the list of top 16 tourist destinations include Baguio City, Davao, Puerto Galera, Bohol, Negros Occidental and Oriental, Roxas Shores and Puerto Princesa.

From January to June, the 16 top tourist destinations drew almost four million tourists, of which 808,380 are foreign nationals and nearly three million are locals.

Durano saw continuing growth in the tourism industry with new silverlegs like the so-called enhanced tourism products and services, adventure sports and cultural packages.

He mentioned the growing popularity of ecotourism routes as another tourist product that promotes local destinations and cultural exchanges.

Durano is optimistic on the growth of five tourists that visited Cebu, Bohol, Camiguin Mindoro and Batangas. *James Rosendie Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Metro Water Is Safe!

A SCENE from the musicale "Ako Si Ninoy," a production by a theater group based in Balic-Balic, Manila, and ultimately a tribute to the Aquino couple whose sacrifices helped restore Philippine democracy.

CAST MEMBERS of "Ako si Ninoy" musicale, while celebrating the life and legacy of Benigno Jr. and Corazon Aquino, also portray the different "everyday heroes" of Philippine society. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOGRAPHS

'Ako si Ninoy,' in art, music, dance

From page A1

public appearance after she was diagnosed with colon cancer earlier that year.

"You are important now more than ever," Aquino then said, addressing some 600 students gathered at Bonifacio Guerrero Conservatory of the La Salle University in Manila. "When a critical mass of young people take on a cause, you can be sure that change on a dramatic scale is under way."

Aquino passed away in the early morning of Aug. 1, just hours after a special performance of "Ako si Ninoy" at the Ayala Museum in Makati. It was received with a standing ovation, with the loudest applause given to Vince Tañada who played Ninoy, and Cindy Lipio, who played Cory.

Aquino's nephew, Bapa Lopa, said his aunt was not able to see the play featuring energetic music and snappy choreography performed by a cast of 60.

"If she had seen this, she'd be very, very happy," Lopa told the Inquirer after the show.

It started in Balic-Balic

Vince Tañada came up with the play's musical story scriptwriter.

A lawyer and actor of the illustrious Tañada clan of Quezon, Quezon, Vince Tañada founded the PIP eight years ago at Holy Trinity parish in Balic-Balic.

"Hindi dapat tayo Broadway, taga Balic-Balic po kami," Tañada, a Pilipinca and stage member, said of his theatrical roots.

The launching of the "I am Ninoy" movement spurred him to write a "dream" musical based on the life of the opposition leader.

Dream come true

It was a "big dream," said Tañada, who knew an uncanny resemblance to the late senator. "Since it was a big dream, I might as well make it complete. I decided to play Ninoy."

While rehearsing for the musical, he contacted the Benigno S. Aquino Foundation (BSAF) to "look at the play" and perhaps sponsor some of its performances.

Aquino's nephew Lopa, who is executive director of the BSAF, showed a keen interest.

"But when they said it was Balic-Balic, that sort of got us worried," he said.

Tañada said their worries "proved to be true, because some side interest [of their cast] disappeared," he said with a laugh.

Ninoy spirit

But Lopa was very much taken with the play.

"They captured the whole 'I am Ninoy' spirit that we launched last year," he said.

Everything about the musical bearded of the namesake, he added, from the music, lyrics, choreography and the cast. They are made up of students and young professionals, who have made theater their "passion."

Tañada said the created was his group's way of giving tribute to Ninoy and Cory. "We believe that art, music and dance are a form of prayer. It is a fitting tribute," he said.

Stage dates

As part of the group's reciprocity tour, "Ako si Ninoy" will be presented today and tomorrow at Adamson University.

The regular theater run will be on Aug. 14 to 16 at Meralco Theater with the UST Symphony Orchestra.

Produced in cooperation with the BSAF, "Ako si Ninoy" will also be staged in various AM Cinemas, at the UP Main Theater, Cultural Center of the Philippines and in theaters in the provinces until March 2010.

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Recto quits GMA Cabinet

From page A1

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Recto's resignation was "surprising," pointing out that Recto was often all-known to be a close ally of Ms. Arroyo.

"His departure represents a big crack in the façade of the alleged administration unity," Pimentel said.

He said Recto's resignation would also have a big impact considering that his wife, Batangas Gov. Vilma Santos.

Suppose to be a popular movie actress who reportedly may run for higher office next year.

Not knowing the reason for Recto's resignation, Pimentel could only speculate that it could be that Recto sensed a potential by the management of the administration to politics he was advocating.

"What comes to my mind is that issue of oil prices where Recto had a tiff with Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes who apparently was getting more support from the administration," Pimentel said. (See *In the Know*)

Shoo-in

"He's a shoo-in for the administration slate, and the victory is 100.0," Claudio said of Recto last night.

Serving under the administration slate, Recto, a former Batangas representative, lost in his reelection bid in the 2007 congressional elections.

Some saw his defeat as an offshoot of the public backlash against his sponsorship in the Senate of the expanded value-added tax (EVAT) that raised the tax rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and lowered many good and services like electricity. (The EVAT measure was the Arroyo administration's centerpiece legislative agenda aimed then at boosting off a fiscal crisis.)

Claudio, secretary general of the administration coalition Lakas-Kampi, earlier indicated that there were eight Cabinet members who would quit in November to run for public office. He did not name them.

Keeping options open

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., who is running for president next year, said Recto's resignation did not come as a surprise.

"We just want to keep his options open—whether to run or whatever," Villar told the Inquirer.

The senator, who is close to Recto—who used to be part of the Nacionalista Group in the Senate along with Villar, said he knew that Recto would want to run again for senator.

Villar later told reporters it would be better to get from Recto the reason he decided to resign.

Vilma Santos' calls

Santos said she had been trying to call her husband but couldn't reach him. "Maybe he's still busy meeting with his staff in Nedá [National Economic and Development Authority]," she said.

Santos, a multiawarded actress, said Recto "submitted his resignation before last week. It's effective Aug. 15."

She said she had yet to discuss with her husband the details of his resignation from Nedá. The socioeconomic planning secretary serves as a concurrent Nedá director general.

The governor said she had yet to ask her husband about the details of his plans to run again for public office.

Asked whether the resignation was sparked by her husband's purported differences with the President, she said: "To be honest, I have no idea regarding the details of his resignation."

De Castro's running mate

There is talk that Recto's wife is being groomed to be the running mate of Vice President Noli de Castro, who is expected to run for president next year. Laughing off the rumor, Santos said: "Thank you for the trust but I am not entertaining such talk."

She has asserted that she would rather focus on Batangas. "I'm only on my first term. There is still a lot of work to be done," she said.

Cory bio-pic

What is certain, though, is that she would rather play presidential Cory is no ordinary woman," she said.

Santos said her had not seen Recto's resignation letter, but said he believed the President would not stop him from leaving the Cabinet to pursue his political plans.

"That's an individual choice. What can we do? That's his privilege," he said.

Quiet about political plans

Recto had been quiet about his political plans unlike some Cabinet members who have been coming out with press or TV ads.

"He's an excellent Cabinet member, and he's a very good team player. He deserves an opportunity to compete adequately for his political plans," Claudio said in a phone interview.

Asked if it wasn't necessary for Recto to leave the Cabinet and prepare for the election, Claudio said: "Everyone has his own sense of timing."

Pemista doused speculations that Recto's resignation had been prompted by his public wrangling with Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes on their different compositions of the oil price increases. "They're on good terms," he said.

Ronald O. Gue, chair secretariat of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), said he did not see any disruption of coordination between Nedá and the private sector on proposed big-ticket infrastructure projects. *With a report from Konrad M. Benitez*

IN THE KNOW

First politician appointed to head Nedá

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO appointed Ralph Recto, a former Batangas representative and senator, to the National Economic and Development Authority Board on July 2008, a year after he lost his bid for reelection to the Senate in May 2007 as part of the administration's Team Unity slate.

Since the Nedá was created in 1973, Recto is the first politician to have been named as the agency's chief.

His appointment as socioeconomic planning secretary came amid the global surge in fuel prices, which pushed to double-digits inflation rates in the country.

Early during his stint as Nedá director general, Recto was vocal about his predictions about the supposed downturn in oil prices to October last year. Congressman Edgardo Espiritu, Bayan Muna and Nedá watchdog, said Recto's "inaction" on the oil price issue—instead of pushing for rollbacks—"betrayed the people."

Recto was also vocal about his opposition to proposals to tax text messaging.

Laiban Dam project

Recently, Recto voiced his opposition to the Laiban Dam project, which he said was done in "haste" and "lacked transparency."

Recto described as "illegal and immoral" a take-or-pay provision in the projected deal between the Metropolitan Water Works and Sinomenge Systems that would be operator Sen Miguel Roh Water Co. Inc.

Born on Dec. 11, 1964, in Manila, Recto graduated from De La Salle University with a degree in Economics, major in Business Administration in 1987. He holds master's degrees from the University of the Philippines in Diliman for Public Administration and from University of Asia and the Pacific for Strategic Business Economics. He is married to actress and Batangas Gov. Vilma Santos.

On July 14, Recto's brother, former Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, along with three other suspects in the assassination attempt on former Gov. Armand Sanchez, was placed on the watch list of the Bureau of Immigration.

Sanchez was in a sports utility vehicle in front of the provincial capitol in 2006 when a bomb exploded. His driver and bodyguard died in the attack.

Sanchez has offered a P1-million reward for the capture, or tip, of the two. Recto's brother and the other suspects. *Sources: Inquirer Archives*

RALPH AND VI Ralph Recto and wife Batangas Gov. Vilma Santos during the interview held at La Ducille restaurant in Rockwell Club, Makati City. INQUIRER PHOTO

Martin R very close to GMA sons

From page A1

an offer—the speakership that he lost in Prospero Nograles to the chairmanship for his support for Cha-cha (charge).

But he is there in the house Representative is tighter with the First Couple's younger son, Camarines Norte Rep. Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo—purportedly his true connection in President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Some say it is closer to Dato, 35, than to Mikey although the latter is closer to his age because they have more things to common, according to a party-list representative who asked not to be named, citing the sensitivity of the issue.

The Lopez representative avoided reporters assembling Dato to forego dial not respond to calls from the heavens.

Original Kampi members

Dato and Romualdez are "original members of Kampi (Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino, since merged with Lakas-CMD), and both are first termers," the source said, adding: "Mikey is from Lakas and a second termer."

In their first crack at Congress, Romualdez and Dato have compiled massive distributed projects for their respective districts.

The projects are said to be worth P1.7 billion for Leyte and P1 billion for Camarines Norte.

Romualdez and Dato hung out a lot with each other, sometimes in Malacañang, said a local government official from the Visayas.

Both men were in Mr. Arroyo's party when she flew in the United States last last month to meet with US President Barack Obama. (Dato was the only one among the three of them who was not in accordance to the First Couple to their US trip.)

The President has played a key role in Leyte politics.

She brokered an agreement between the two rival political families—the Romualdezes and the Petilla—with Rep. Remedios "Mimi" Petilla going into retirement and giving way to Martin Romualdez, and Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla (Lakas) getting another term in office.

'Generous to a fault'

Romualdez is a nephew of former first lady Imelda Marcos.

The local government official described him as "generous to a fault, not only with his money but [also] with his time with the President and every one in his entourage."

"He usually picks up the tab for chicken and food and hotel accommodations," the official said.

An opposition representative from North Luzon said Romualdez had not been averse to getting on the good side of the President and he sees no reason he was angling for the House's top spot.

"He does not hide his ambition to emulate his grandfather, Daniel Romualdez, who was Speaker from 1957 to 1962," said the South Luzon lawmaker.

Romualdez's chief of staff, Anjoli Lucia Tan-Kintanar, herself admitted that being close to Malacañang had its perks.

"As congressmen, I could say is relatively close to the President," Tan-Kintanar told the Inquirer in an interview last year.

"But it is why the President often invites him to join her trips abroad. There is always an invitation from Malacañang and even from the House [leadership] for him to join the presidential entourage."

'Soltering the ground'

Rep. Teodoro Casiño of the militant party-list group Bayan Muna said Mr. Arroyo should have thought twice before letting a nephew of Imelda Marcos foot the P20,000 (close to P1 million) bill for the dinner at Le Cirque in New York. (See related story on Page A1.)

Casiño said that whether it was Romualdez or his New York-based sibling Daniel who had picked up the tab, Mr. Arroyo should have been "more circumspect" in accepting a gift in the form of a lavish dinner for Romualdez's chief of staff.

Anjoli Lucia Tan-Kintanar, herself admitted that being close to Malacañang had its perks.

"The

Editor Tobbyboy S. Mabanglo • Assistant Editor Francis T. J...

SPORTS

Gutsy Powerade-RP yields to taller Iran

Iranian free throws thwart Filipino rallies

MAINSTREAM: Hikmat Bahraini (front) scores around the pick provided by Hamed Haddadi who puts Ato Ular (left) and Gabe Norwood out of play

By Marong R. Castillo

TIANJIN, CHINA—A SEVERELY UNDERSIZED POWERADE-Philippines five went down against Iran Tuesday afternoon, but not after one of its greatest games yet in the 25th Fiba Asia qualifying for next year's World Championships.

"We had problems matching up with their duo," national coach Yeng Guiao said after the 75-66 defeat at the Tianjin Gymnasium here where the Filipinos tripled by as many as 20 points early before sealing a spirited second-half chase fall short.

"We couldn't defend their big men and simply gave up too many fouls. I guess if we were more in-utilize with the international (advancing) rule we could manage this better."

Still, Guiao said the Filipinos' experience against the Iranians would stand them in good stead in their next important match in three days.

"This is a good preparation for us for the crossover (quarterfinal phase)," he said. "The experience we had in this game will go a long way against either Jordan or Lebanon (in the Final Eight). That will be our biggest game in this tournament."

The Filipinos, who were rebuffed by a total of 15 fouls compared to the six of the Iranians, accumulated 30 free throws.

Iran, considered as the tournament's defending champion after toiling the Beijing Olympics qualifying stage in Tokushima, Japan, two years ago, outscored 23 free throws as against the Philippines' two from four attempts.

That statistic nullified the Filipinos' valiant effort all the bounds which they surprisingly won, 37-35, despite the presence of Iran's 7-foot-2 National Basketball Association veterans Hamed Haddadi.

The Iranians remained undefeated in five games but need a 4-0 record since their win over Uzbekistan in the first round was not carried over here.

The Filipinos dropped to a lean 2-2 slate but have actually won three games counting the one against Sri Lanka in the Group A elimination.

Haddadi came away with 16 rebounds, 23 points and five block shots and drew great help offensively from 6-foot-9 forward Nikkhah Bahrami, who raised in a game-high 25 and won a virtual puzzle for the Filipino defense.

The Philippines clung it out with Kuwait at 9 a.m. Wednesday and is heavily favored to win and become the No. 7 team in the bracket, which is now known as Group E and composed of the top three teams from both Groups A and B.

After the match against the Kuwaitis, the Filipinos take a breather like the others on Thursday before resuming for quarterfinal action against either Jordan or Lebanon.

The Filipinos' victory against Chinese Taipei on Monday overall an early collision with title favorite China.

James Hap scored 14 points off the bench and showed scoring boosts with Willie Miller, who also did not start Tuesday afternoon.

Gabe Norwood chanted out his finest of frontier game, shooting 11 until Cyrus Baguio the fourth Filipino in twin digits with 11.

A 16-0 bonus run bridging the first and second periods put the Filipinos into a 18-14 hole which they struggled to climb out of the rest of the way.

A determined Filipino opening already changed that lead, and with Haddadi denied down by three defensive near the end of the game, the Filipinos got to within nine points, 73-82, following back-to-back Miller triples.

Haddadi prevented the Filipinos from rousing any closer by combining a down by Jared Dillinger, before Ildric Jabulan nailed an 18-foot jumper and Hikmat Bahrami hit a triple for an 87-71 Iran bulge, time down to two minutes.

The Philippines sustained lost from the outside, running 16-of-43 three-point attempts for a respectable 37 percent clip. In their 77-70 win over the Taiwanese, the Filipinos made 13 of 30 attempts.

Even though they have been playing well lately Guiao sustained his boss against taking Iranian lightly.

"Kuwait is a dangerous team and we can't let them get into their rhythm," he said. "They are a pesky team, hard to shake off."

The Kuwaitis forward one of consecutive after tabbing a 78-33 loss at the hands of the Japanese.

Iran
Philippines

Guiao: We can't be Asia's best again if PBA stops forming nat'l teams

By Marong R. Castillo

TIANJIN, CHINA—NATIONAL COACH YENG Guiao put the state of basketball in the country in simple terms... in homecoming terms, to last.

"We have to be cautious of its breeding," the lifetime mentor, who is also now homecoming, said Monday night after the Philippines finished a quarterfinal berth in the 25th Fiba Asia qualifying here.

"Let's not throw away the gains of knowledge we had in this tournament by not playing (tournaments) it again," he said. "I am not. the PBA cannot turn its back on the chance (of Filipinos) to have another PBA selection play (internationally) again."

The Pampanga star governor stressed that he is not after another national coaching job.

He might not have said it, but Guiao does not like the idea of the PBA forming a new national team only when a big tournament is around the bend.

Members of the PBA board, as well as RP team manager Jit Sinchoe of Coca-Cola, have said, however, that this will be the last tournament where PBA stars will play for the country.

"You are, in the PBA, I, as a coach, only aspire to hone [my] talent, [talk 'N Text and all those other teams," Guiao said. "That's why when we go out to the country to play, we get astounded by the competition because we've never seen them before.

"If we continue to only play against each other, we continue to only beat each other, and that is not helping the country realize its goal of becoming great to host again."

Pasig int'l marathon sees field of 20,000 runners

By Cedriff Tupaz

ORGANIZERS OF THE PASIG MARATHON "A Run for Tony River" are eyeing 20,000 participants when the international marathon takes centerstage on Nov. 8, beginning and ending at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila.

Gina Lopez, managing director of the organizing ABS-CBN Foundation, said the event is one of the many rallies[sic] to a seven-year plan to clean the river.

"It's not just another run," Lopez said at the PBA Forum at the Shakey's U.N. Avenue branch yesterday.

"This run is very important to take our attention for our cause. Together, we can make a difference."

And to remind the runners of the advocacy, the 42K route has been designed to pass through eight major bridges, including the Nagtahan Bridge, Makati-Mandaluyong and Guadalupe.

Race director Rudy Biscocho said apart from the 42K race, 21K, 5K, 10K events will also be held.

For hobbyists, a relay event with teams of 20 runners is also set.

Registration is pegged at P2[illegible] interested parties may call 415-2911 or 415-2272.

Rizal batters take a beating

HOST DISTRICT E SUFFERED THE MISERY of Pipal Province with an 11-3 victory Monday in the 2009 Big League Softball World Series at the Lee Field in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

It was Rizal's fourth loss in five games.

Shirlyn Francisco, who stumbled two homeruns in the first three games, continued her solid play with three hits and two RBIs, but Rizal pitchers Jolly Mendiola, Lanilyn Alipio, Mae Jay Villanueva and Marie Grace Lumanog dosed 10 hits to District E, which put the game away with five runs in the fifth inning.

Rizal scored one run in each inning against Uli Eun signed Pennsylvania, which beat District E, 3-1, late yesterday.

Meanwhile, International Little League Association of Manila tries to bounce back from a runaway defeat when it hosts Uli Eun on Thursday.

The Blue Jaysers slumbed 2-1-2 last to Uli Eun's homers Jun Cadhoon, Lanzinian in their first game Monday.

Cedriff P. Tupaz

Wanted: naturalized cagers

By Jose Navarro

THERE WILL BE TWO NATURALIZED PLAYers for the Philippines when the Smart Gilas Pilipinas National Team aims for an Olympic berth in the 2011 Fiba Asia Championships Cup.

Sarousberg Basketball ng Pilipinas executive director Jeff Weld said they want to scouring area in the United States has been reassured to look for another reinforcement willing to don the national colors.

Smart Gilas is close to signing a deal with 6-foot-11 lineman CJ Giles, who agreed to go through the naturalization process and help the national team in the qualifying tournament for the 2012 London Olympics.

The team has also invited Chris Ryan Lutz, a 6-foot-4 Filipino-heritage dribbler out of Marshall University, to augment RP coach Rajko Toroman's pool of outside shooters.

Fil-Swiss draftee to open doors for more half-Filipinos in PBA

SUCCESSFUL IN HAVING TWO ATTEMPTS TO bring players into the Philippine Basketball Association, the homegrown reporter down Tomorrow looking for more potential professional stars to include in his pool of talents.

Torney, who owns A.T. Talents International Management, got prospects[sic] after his player 6-foot-0 Swiss Michael Andre Berkshire, was picked in the recent PBA rookie draft by the Alaska Aces in their eighth overall pick.

"The best [are] many players who are dreaming to play in the PBA, but most of them are not properly equipped," said Torney. "So I'm determined to exert more effort to help them develop their skills."

Santo Tomas hotshot Ababou paces MVP race

By Jasmine W. Payo

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS STAL-wart Dylan Ababou emerged as top scorer-wise in the UAAP Most Valuable Player race, vaulting ahead of last year's runner-up Rabeh Al-Hussaini of Ateneo and four-for Eastern University standouts.

Ababou, a member of the national development squad, ended the early race for the highest individual game after earning 16.65 statistical points (SP) at the end of the first round of the men's basketball tournament.

"I can't let my teammates down," said Ababou, the only remaining member of UST's 2006 champion team. "It must really hurt. It hurts. I have to take charge so that our sophomores and rookies will gain more confidence."

Ababou, a 6-foot-3 forward, led the league in scoring at 19.6 per game on top of 7.1 rebounds and 2.4 assists.

FEU center Aldrech Ramos ranked second with 64.42 SP built on double-double averages of 11.4 points, a league-best 10.9 rebounds and 1.9 blocks.

Ababou's teammate Rhaster Mina came in third at 64.14 SP after finishing second in scoring at 17 minutes and eighth in rebounding at 8.3 boards.

Ali Hussaini, who powered the "Blue Eagles' title run last season, dropped to eighth place at 52.26 SP after scoring a third-best 14.9 points and six rebounds.

University of the East center Raul Lim (58.26 SP) and FEU-Diliman guard Mark Barroca (56.14 SP) rounded out the top five, according to the official numbers released yesterday by league statistician Emporium Technology Inc. and Smart Bro.

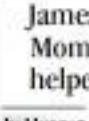
Lingas averaged a third-best 14.9 points and a second-best nine rebounds, while Barroca led in assists at two per game aside from earning 12.9 points and three assists.

Other contenders were the UE duo of Paul Lee (55.28 SP), who topped in assists at 5.4, and Elmer Espiritu (54.77 SP), and the FEU pair of Rippylyn Beltran (51.41 SP) and RR Garcia (47.83 SP).

ABABOU: Taking charge for Tigers

James Yap: Mom Cory helped me

IN HUDDLE


Beth Cielo

TAIPEI, CHINA—Did you do it? I asked James Yap minutes after the Philippines avenged twice-all history against Chinese Taipei, 77-70, Monday night at the Taipei Gym.

He replied that he expected to win by 20 points. It's one of many reasons why James is a big basketball fan, especially when Ateneo becomes part of this equation. Smile.

"She watched all my games on television," James said. "She used to watch my good (and) bad games. I'm not exactly the first-to-congratulate-me-after-a-victory-if-I-had-a-bad-game, she-would-remind-me-by-suggesting-I-might-have-had-a-off night.

"Nothing-but-nice-things-like-that-was very-kind. She-was-very-supportive. I-will-miss-her," James-added.

According to James, Cory always advised him to put the ball control above all else.

"I didn't even think of totally skipping the NBA-to-go-to-Guangzhou. I-had-no-hesitation-that-I-had-to-play-and-suit-up-for-the-Philippine-team. That's what Mom would want me to do."

She, James said, he played for the assurance of no regret in the game against Chinese Taipei.

"I hope it will not be asking too much if we-could-ask-Coach-Chot-to-get-us-one-tougher-games-ahead," James said.

* * *

It was double-celebration for members of the PBA Board who held their first board meetings of the season here in Yangjiu amidst new chair Lim Ah cancer of her gay king.

For one, there was the victory over the Taiwanese.

Adding to the adrenalin rush was the many crowd ideas proposed by the spirited wine-chair, a DMAy predecessor and presidents of Air21.

One of the youngest PBA governors ever, Lito is brimming with ideas for the league which he hopes to implement in our season with the approval of the board.

"I hope to introduce many changes in our PLL Diffeo league, even if it will require amendments in the rules," Lito announced over breakfast the other day.

His principles include a tieup with a developmental league, either the PBA or the Liga Filipinas. He said a merger would be ideal. the convention of the PBA into a corporation, and the introduction of revenue-generating projects which will minimize the open-to-all cost of a team.

* * *

His exposure to international competition has opened the eyes of national hoop coach Yeng Guiao.

"I believe only the PBA can send the strongest 10 team-to-compete in international events," he said. "So-hope we should make-what we are doing now as a continuous commitment."

Yeng pointed out that members of the national teams from countries such as Korea, Japan and even China are called from their respective pro leagues.

"It will be mutually beneficial to our country and the PBA. Considering it a provisional basis doesn't do us any good. We have to treat-from-scratch everytime. We don't improve, we lag behind."

Yeng, and competing internationally on a regular basis, will not only develop Philippine basketball but PBA basketball as well.

* * *

MISSPENT. Last year's PBA dual champs' Talk-n-Text's double-turnaround in Manila, left-was-suffering-from-sore-butt-sitting-back-pains of unknown origin and had to be under the care of a physician... Which-is-why-Jimmy-Alapag-did-not-suit-up to play with-guns in the fifth and-by-night tournament-back in the Alex-team? "Ey-ing to keep up with the younger guys," Ari said.

Lowly teams seek NCAA resurgence

AMORTIZU's Vonne Perez goes for a layup off Perpetual's Nathaniel Estanga in their recent match.

By Cedelf P. Tupas

FOUR TEAMS IN THE LOWER HALF OF THE standings try to rekindle their Final Four bids on the penultimate day of the first round of the 85th NCAA basketball tournament at the Filoil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

Arellano U seeks to start another winning streak against sputtering Angeles University Foundation at 4 p.m., after Emilio Aguinaldo College and Perpetual Help break their tie at eighth place.

Although they are languishing at the bottom half of the standings, the four teams can still crash into the semifinals with a turnaround performance today as they wrap up their first-round assignments.

EAC coach Nestor Isla feels confident of his charges against Perpetual Help.

"We're in top shape, our last game was a testament that we're peaking at the right time," said Isla, after the Generals dragged the Letran Knights to overtime before yielding, 84-80. "Despite the loss we know we achieved our purpose."

The Altas go into the game still reeling from a 79-81 beating to the Chiefs. But rookie coach Boris Aldegore remains optimistic that they can still turn their fortunes around.

"We just want to give our 200 percent because good things happen when we do our job," said Aldegore.

Arellano mentor Jerry Odulio is urging the Chiefs to attack early against the Great Danes, who currently rests a league-worst seven games losing skid.

"I told the boys to be aggressive on both ends of the floor and stick to the game plan," said Odulio, who hopes to draw another big game from the duo of Ed Cinacera and Adrian Celada.

Cinacera and Celada contributed for 35 points against the Altas and 18 markers in the triple-overtime defeat to St. Benilde two weeks ago.

"We will keep on pressuring their ball carriers and force them to commit turnovers," said Altas, whose Chiefs opened the tournament with back-to-back wins before dropping four straight.

	W	L
San Beda	10	1
San Sebastian	9	2
Lyceum	8	3
Mapua	7	4
Jose Rizal U	6	5
Arellano U	5	6
EAC	4	7
Emilio Aguinaldo College	3	8
Perpetual Help	3	8
Angeles U Foundation	0	11

TODAY'S GAMES: (Filoil Flying V Arena)
4 p.m. — Arellano U vs. Angeles U Foundation
Perpetual Help vs. Emilio Aguinaldo College

Dueñas repeats, but top 3 miss Milo 42K finals

DUEÑAS approaches the finish line tape held by Vice Mayor Jose Antonio Nebres (right) and local race organizer Dionisio Balinas. At left is Manila MVP Pia Cayetano.

TAGBILARAN CITY—CEBUANO RUNners topped the 21K elimination race of the 33rd National Milo Marathon here on Sunday but none among the top three finishers in both divisions qualified for the national finals.

John Philip Dueñas of Carmen Cavite repeated as champion while Brenda Nadale of Mandaue City snapped a lone field of female racers for her first big victory. They bagged P10,000 and an elegant glass trophy each.

Dueñas, a 22-year-old bet from Davao Southwestern University, engaged Cory Maneja in a tight contest throughout the race and finally overnose behind Cory Mall and eventually woofed a mere second.

"Cory was tough, I couldn't get away from him," said Dueñas in Filipino, after crossing the finish line in one hour, 15 minutes and 59 seconds.

Maneja trailed all the way from footgun did happy sadly as he failed to qualify for the Oct. 11 national finals in Manila. But just like Dueñas, he failed to pass the qualifying mark of 1:10:00 for male runners.

Jose Consuegra was third in 1:10:24.

"It's such a waste," said Maneja. "My only consolation is I got P6,000. I went to the Bataan elimination (on April 19) but I was late for the race."

Nadale topped the women's race with a mediocre time of 1:40:15. Placing second and third were Evangeline Balmeceda (2:14:36) and Edna Adano (2:38:43), respectively. The qualifying time for women is 1:35:00.

Rina Enriquez topped the men's 10K (60-over) in 36:03 while Jacqueline Cabahug won the women's event (46:42).

Reuian Cabahug (17:32) and Nora Bonello (24:05) won the 5K for men.

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HEART, SOUL, SPORTS
Bonnie Hyacinth

DUE TO THE ASSISTANCE OF MY son Gabriel, who was finally allowed to watch his first "live" basketball game, I was able to witness a classic match between La Salle and Ateneo last Saturday.

It could not have been better than this.

The stadium was packed to the rafters.

It was a sea of yellow.

The most sight of those added so much more intensity to the already emotion-filled game.

* * *

Walking into the Araneta Coliseum brought back a lot of memories.

Superstars of the past, mainly greats, flashed through my mind.

Starting a lot of old and familiar faces left me nostalgic of my youth.

There were some faces I remembered but couldn't put a name on.

It was good seeing all of them once again.

* * *

A lot of people were expecting a workout game where Ateneo would prevail with a comfortable margin.

However, rumors massively were told to put the qualifying mark of 1:10:00 for male runners.

Jose Consuegra was third in 1:10:24.

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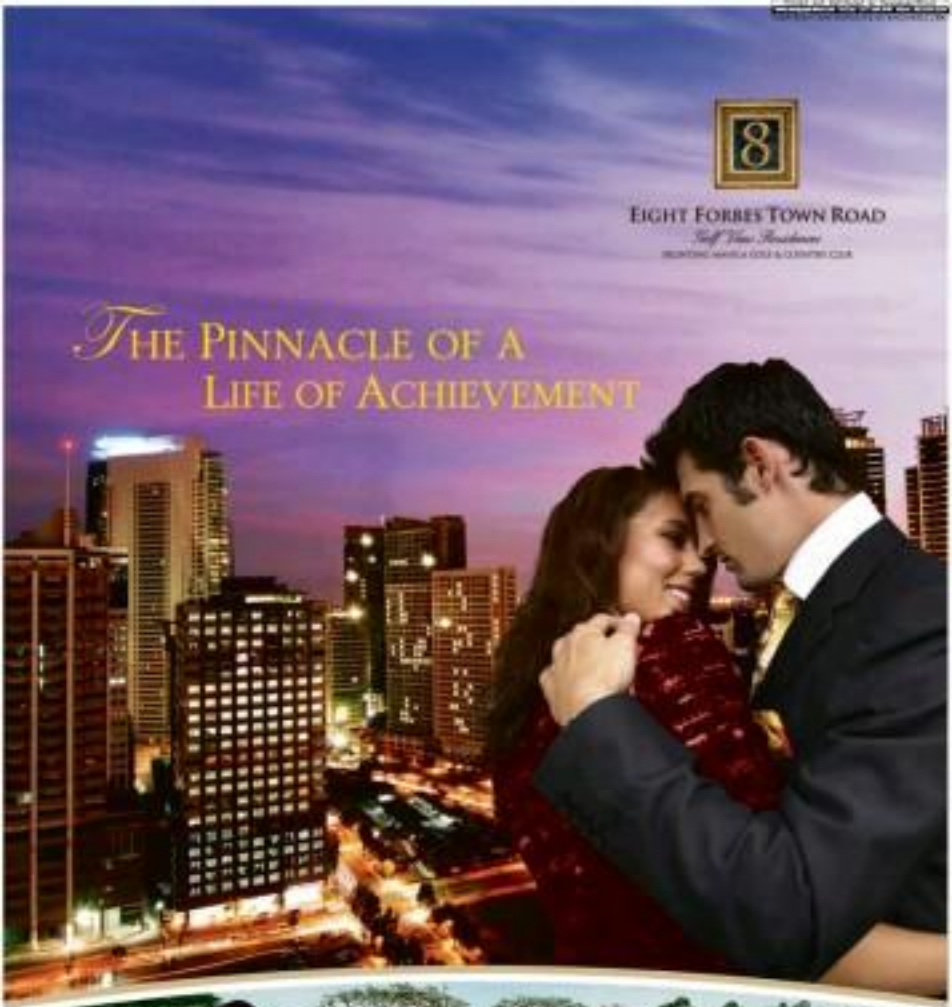
SJC 'Tagbugon' derby gets going

TOP COOKS FROM METRO MANILA AND THE provinces might be busy hovercrafting at 2 p.m. today for the 32nd Pahabol Sa Tagbugon 4-cook derby of the San Juan Coliseum.

Host Bobbit Plaza auditioned the participation of Don Du, Ricky Magbitoc, SJC mayor Rodolfo Pirata, Mayor J. Pangandoy, Gov. Eastern Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Boxing Boss Fernie Esperon, Joey Abacan, Ram Mascardo, Gabbi Garcia, Rey Reyes, Bubchoy Clavo, Cris Cardino, Bobby Gazzo and VP Bonnie group, among others.

RACING FORM
By Top Choice/ An Sec/Lazaro LP



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Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Lhuillier

Cops kill 7 suspected kidnappers

Businesswoman rescued from group's safe house in Taytay

By Beverly T. Mahinlad

SEVEN SUSPECTED MEMBERS OF A KIDNAP FOR ransom group were killed by policemen who safely rescued their captive, a Chinese-Filipino businesswoman who owns a garments factory in Navotas City.

Michelle Tan, 30, was kidnapped by five men as she was evacuating inside her factory on Tuesday. The incident was witnessed by her relatives and employees who promptly called the police for help.

At around 11 p.m. on Monday, a joint team composed of members of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Northern Police District and the Caloocan police managed to track down the victim after she was being held in the kidnap group's safe house in Taytay, Rizal.

Senior Supt. Aulo Sumiru, Caloocan police chief, said the police team raided the house on West Bank Road, Barangay San Juan, killing two members of the gang who were guarding the victim.

At the same time, the victim's family received a text message for her release until the other members of the group who were apparently suspects that Tan had already been rescued unharmed.

The police team, taking information that it had been penetrated, later tracked down the five remaining members of the group in Caloocan City.

A police checkpoint was set up to the city and at around 2:20 a.m. yesterday, the gang members were spotted in a Toyota Innova taxi.

Sumiru said the police tried to flag down the vehicle but the driver did not stop and a chase ensued.

The gang members were cornered in Bonanza, Caranday, resulting to a shootout which left all five of them dead.

"The suspects ignored orders for them to surrender and exchanged shots for at least 10 minutes with my men until they were killed," Senior Supt. Isagani Nerona, CIDG-NCR chief, said.

Police recovered from the fatalities three cal. .38 revolvers, a cal. .45 pistol, and a Scion firearm.

The cost that the gang members were riding in was identified as the same vehicle which was reported stolen in Metro-manila last week.

Police said they were able to track down the kidnappers based on information given to them by the woman who was tortured Tan's abductors.

The two had identified one of the kidnappers as Sinamlan Bacunan, the live-in partner of Tan's former employee who was known only as Jessie.

Sources said Bacunan was among the seven men who were killed. He was identified through an identification card found in his pocket.

With AP report

LOOKING FOR NEW HOMES
Evicted urban poor workers hold a rally in Makati City to protest the government's failure to find a relocation site for them. INQ FILE

MMDA: 5,000 Metro families face eviction

By Nika Catherine Calleja

AT LEAST 5,000 SQUATTER families living in the metropolis face eviction from areas identified by the Metro Manila Interagency Committee on Informal Settlers (MMAC) as danger zones and priority relocation areas.

However, MMAC and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando said that qualified families would be given housing benefits based on the guidelines of the MMDC Coexistence Shelter Program.

In a statement issued yesterday, Fernando identified the danger zones, most of which are located beside waterways. These were Damayan Lagi, 11th Street and Sta. Cruz beside the San Juan River in Quezon City; Barangays 177, 178, 176, 179, 180, 185 and 202 near Estero de Tripa de Gallina in Pasay City; Old Balara Creek and canal on Commonwealth Avenue, and Mauwag and Mauwas on Araneta Avenue, all in Quezon City.

The Sectoral Housing Authority also submitted to the committee 11 priority areas for relocation such as Barong, Pasig; Sanitation, Mandaluyong; Antonio, Bulacan; Quiapo, Nueva Ecija; Pinag Ilaiwa de Paco, E-18 Navotas; Market 3 Valenzuela; Interim and Sta. Cruz.

A total of 2,684 families live in these communities, the MDA said in its report.

The inter-agency committee met for the first time on Monday in Iron on the proposed implementing rules and regulations of Executive Order No. 803, signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 21.

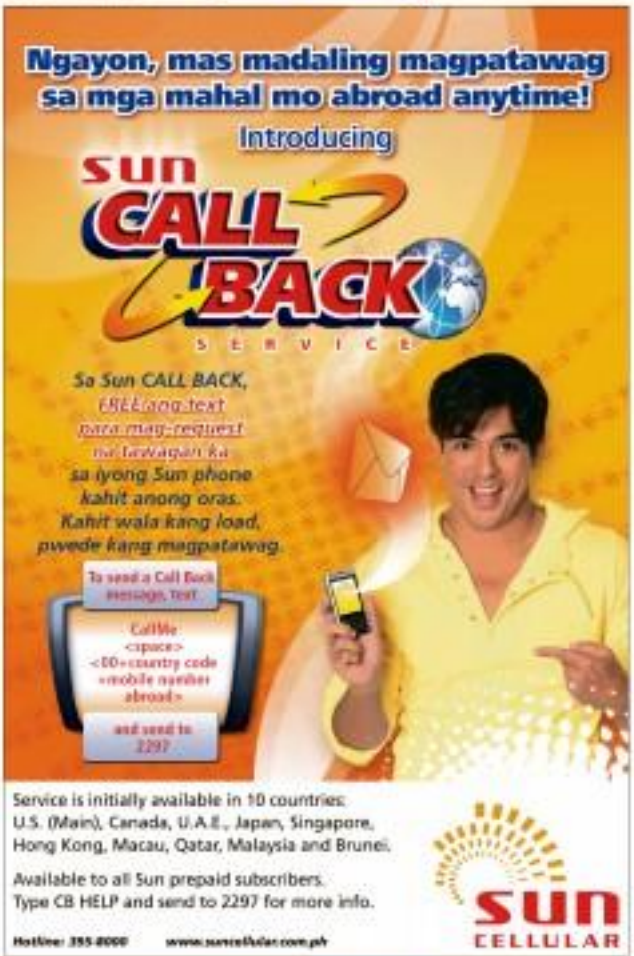
The time frame for the relocation and relocation of affected families, however, was not discussed.

EO 803 orders MMDAC to "plan, coordinate and implement, in coordination with concerned government agencies, a comprehensive shelter program for informal settlers affected by government priority infrastructure projects and those living in danger areas within Metro Manila."

Fernando said the committee was considering three types of relocation. These were "off-site relocation" or the transfer of an informal settler to another area; "on-site development" or the direct purchase of the lot occupied by informal settlers for the purpose of upgrading; and the development of medium-rise buildings like those in Vitas, Tondo.

Fernando said he wanted the illegal settlers to be relocated to a medium-rise building which would not require a huge lot.

Based on MMAC figures, 544,000 squatter families live in Metro Manila with 73 percent occupying private and government-owned lands. On the other hand, 20.8 percent live in dangerous areas beside creeks and other waterways.



Man kills, cuts out chunk of flesh from victim

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A MAN BELIEVED TO BE A member of a gang-running syndicate was shot dead on a busy street in Quezon City yesterday morning.

Witnesses said that as the victim was lying bloodied on the ground, the lone gunman took out a knife and then cut out a chunk of flesh from his abdomen before escaping.

Chief Insp. Benjamin Bustamante Jr., head of the Quezon City Police District's homicide division, identified the victim as Marcelito Adriando, 36, a resident of Barangay Bangkal in Makilan, Bulacan.

He said Adriando sold guns and gun spare parts to "well entrenched individuals" although the police suspect that the victim probably supplied firearms to criminal gangs.

Bustamante added that the police would summon for questioning some of the people whose names appeared in the victim's cell phone.

"The cell phone also showed that he had several transactions [regarding the sale of] homemade guns," he said.

Based on an initial investigation, Adriando worked as a gunsmith for a licensed firearms dealer in Manila.

Bustamante, however, said that the victim canvassed business with some people outside the gun shop which, according to him, was against the law.

Case officer PO3 Amelito C. Gagaoa said that Adriando was shot at close range by a man at around 9:50 a.m. on Mahabio Street, Barangay Escubierta, Cubao, in front of several people.

The victim died instantly due to multiple gunshot wounds. As he lay on the street, the gunman carved out a chunk of the flesh from the right side of his abdomen.

"We have yet to establish... safety a big portion of his flesh was taken by the gunman[,]" the policeman said.

He added that a check of the text messages found in the victim's cell phone showed that he was about to meet a man identified as Analiza Domingo.

The police investigator drove Domingo, who upon being informed of the shooting incident, went to the Quezon City Police District headquarters in Camp Rafael to clear his name.

"Domingo admitted that he was supposed to buy a gun allegedly from the victim. He agreed to meet the victim in Cubao," Gagaoa said.

Domingo, he added, was not taken by the police into custody although they made him promise that he would present himself for further questioning.

WAITING IN VAIN! Two men wait for the fish to bite as they cast their fishing rods in a river half-filled with trash in Pasay City.

Dignified looking cops eyed

By DJ Yap

HERE FOR I WON'T FIRE INvestment smoking or eating restaurant chains in the uptown Pasig, Mandaluyong, Makati and San Juan.

At least, that's what the newly installed director of the Eastern Police District (EPD) mentions. Most dignified and responsible-looking policemen.

"As police officers, they have to dignify their presence in front of the public," said Chief Supt. Benjamil Magnata, who took over from outgoing EPD director Chief Supt. Leo Cudiamat on Friday.

Magnata said the physical appearance of police officers would play a part in the criminality investigation of the EPD to regain the residents' trust and faith toward them as persons of authority.

This means EPD policemen should always be in proper uniform and should not be seen smoking in public.

Not only that, "they shouldn't be seen eating corn or ice cream in the streets," Magnata said in an interview yesterday.

Magnata, the former chief of the National Capital Region Police Office directorial staff, said he puts a premium on disciplined police personnel toppersonnel leadership.

He added that he had met with the chiefs of police of the four cities under EPD jurisdiction and had asked each of them to give him their respective orders.

The new EPD director said he particularly challenged Senior Supt. Napoleon Villegas, Pasig police chief, to do all he could to eradicate the drug trade in his city.

SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK Two kids cheer around for the camera while swimming in an open manhole filled with dirty water in a local street in Purok 1 in Pasig City.

2 men who hijacked truck with ₱1.2M rice cargo nabbed

By Jeannette I. Andrade

MANILA POLICEMEN ARRESTED AT A checkpoint before dawn yesterday two men who allegedly hijacked a 40-foot container van carrying some 1,000 sacks of rice worth P1.2 million.

Operatives of the Manila Police District's auction theft unit arrested Corey Reyes, 32, of Leyte, Malabon City, and Claro Bacolcol, 43, of Vitas, Tondo, Manila, aboard the stolen truck (TWH-487).

Senior Insp. Randy Malayo, MPD auction theft unit chief, said the two men were apprehended at a police checkpoint on Road 10 on Tondo at around 2:30 a.m. yesterday. With them was the truck driver, Marcelo Garcia, an employee of Quickmans Cargo Moving Inc.

Garcia told the police that he had stopped the truck by the side of the road to relieve himself when Reyes and Bacolcol approached him, and at gunpoint, ordered him to get back into the vehicle.

The two men then boarded the truck and instructed him to drive toward Road 10.

Malayo said that by coincidence, his men had set up a checkpoint along the thoroughfare, leading to the arrest of the two men.

When Bacolcol, the man yielded a .357 revolver and a facsimile.

Malayo said that before the two men were apprehended, they had been receiving several complaints from truck drivers who claimed to have been victimized by holdupsevery Road 10.

He added that they were now conducting follow-up operations against other hijackers believed to be working in connivance with Reyes and Bacolcolo.

QC dads want to rename 2 streets after Cory

By Julie M. Aurelio

IF TWO QUEZON CITY COUNcilors want to have their way, Timog Street in Barangay West Triangle would be named after its most prominent resident.

The late President Corazon C. Aquino.

Two city councilors have pushed for the renaming of two roads in Quezon City in honor of the former leader who died on Aug. 1 after battling colon cancer.

In separate measures filed with the city council, the councilors, who do not live in the same district where Aquino resided for many years, proposed the renaming of two streets in honor of "The Cory" as Aquino was called.

The first proposal, Councilor Dioscoro Ma. Sorio of the third district pushed for the renaming of Timog Street in Barangay West Triangle after Aquino.

Sorio said the stretch of Timog Street—which is located in the first district—should be known as "President Corazon C. Aquino Street."

"It is but proper that Quezon City officially recognize her by naming a street in honor of her," Sorio said in a private release," the councilor said.

Not to be outdone, majority floor leader Antonio Inton Jr. filed a similar ordinance in which he proposed the renaming of Banawe Road in Barangay Bungad as a form of tribute to Aquino.

Ironically, Inton is a councilor of the fourth district while Barangay Bungad is in the second district.

Inton's measure sought to name Banawe Road as "Corazon C. Aquino Road," for the latter president's role in helping restore democracy in the country.

The councilor said this would "steal and commemorate [Aquino's] name, virtue, heroism and accomplishments."

Both proposed ordinances were taken up on first reading during the city council's regular session on Monday.

Only last week, the Quezon City council approved a resolution declaring Jan. 25, Aquino's birthday, as "Cory Aquino Democracy Day" in the city.

In a three-page resolution, the city council also conveyed its condolences to the family of the late president.

Sen. JV, her birth anniversary, shall be declared Cory Aquino Democracy Day in Quezon City and shall henceforth be celebrated every year beginning 2010," the measure read.

The resolution called for special activities to be conducted in schools and city government offices to commemorate Aquino's birthday.

It also sought to name one of the city government's awards in the former leader's honor.

"The city's Gawad Huwargad Awards for Most Outstanding Citizens shall forgive confer-ring a special recognition, the Cory Aquino Award, to the ordinary citizen who through a life of virtue and outstanding good citizenship, changed his or her community, society and the country," part of the resolution read.

The city government will also erect a monument in memory of the country's first woman president on the grounds of city hall.

The resolution was signed by all 28 members of the city council.

Aquino, a long-time resident of 25 Times St. in Barangay West Triangle, was the recipient of the Gawad Parangal Awards for Most Outstanding Citizen in Government Service in 2002.

METROBRIEFS

Fire destroys 28 homes

A FIRE razed 28 houses and damaged 25 others in Marulas, Valenzuela City. At press time, families who were left homeless were forced to take shelter in a nearby school and barangay court. The fire started in a paint factory called Metro Globus Chemicals on 8 Battle Street in Barangay Marulas at around 11:20 a.m. Firefighters had a hard time dousing the fire because of the combustible materials stored in the compound. The fire declared under control by the Bureau of Fire Protection-Valenzuela City after more than three hours. No fatalities or injuries were reported.

Beverly T. Ramirez

3 men nabbed for rape

POLICE arrested three fishermen for allegedly raping a 19-year-old girl at the South Harbor near the Manila Yacht Club in Manila. The fishermen, meanwhile, denied the accusation and said they were simply "naked jumping fishes." Elpidio Atanacio, 34, of Pilot, Manila; Jaime Jara, 29, of Malate, Manila; and Ismil Abajo, 24, of Sagip Street in Pasig, were arrested as they were fleeing naked from the scene of the alleged rape on Bayside, Roxas Boulevard. They were promptly turned over to the custody of the police.

Jeannette I. Andrade

DID YOU KNOW

THE ARMANDO T. Stadium sits on a 5.8-hectare government site in Quezon City and features a grandstand, an eight-lane track and field oval, bleachers and a gymnasium. It was PC Hallandale's brainchild and was completed in 1966 by then-President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

DATA: Architecture, Inquirer Research

METRO
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Man tries to kill self in Makati mall

By Nita Catherine Calleja

A STILL UNIDENTIFIED MAN tried to kill himself by jumping from the fourth floor of the Glorietta 4 shopping mall in Makati City at around 3 p.m. yesterday.

Customers of a coffee shop who witnessed the suicide attempt said the man was seen talking to his girlfriend identified only as Hadrian before he jumped over the railings.

The coffee shop is situated on a balcony on the mall's fourth floor which overlooks the street.

The man fell on a canopy on the second floor made of reinforced glass. He plunged through the glass and fell on the ground. Still, his remained conscious until he was rushed to the Makati Medical Center.

Investigators were still looking into the incident.

A CURIOUS crowd gathers in front of Glorietta mall in Makati City after a still unidentified man fired Cried to kill himself by jumping from a balcony on the fourth floor. Guards rushed the man to a nearby hospital.

Hillary: I'm the US secretary of state, not Bill

KHARTOUM, SUDAN—US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's temper flared on Monday when a Congolese university student asked her her husband's thinking on an international matter.

"My husband is not secretary of state, I am," she obviously annoyed Clinton replied sharply.

A week after former President Bill Clinton traveled to North Korea to secure the release of two detained American journalists and stole the limelight from the sitting secretary, Clinton was clearly irritated by the question at a town hall forum in Khartoum.

"You want me to tell you what my husband thinks?" she replied incredulously when the male student asked her what "Mr. Clinton" thought of World Bank concerns about a multibillion-dollar Chinese loan offer to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"If you want my opinion, I will tell you my opinion. I am not going to be channeling my husband."

The questions were left unanswered as the moderator of the event quickly moved on.

Published for weeks after she was injured during a fall this spring, Clinton returned to a flurry of speculation that she had been elevated to the role as a diplomatic force inside the administration, overshadowed by globetrotting US President Barack Obama, US Vice President Joe Biden and a bevy of heavyweight special envoys assigned to the world's critical hotspots.

Clinton launched into a series of high-profile speeches and television appearances. But just as she landed in Africa, her ambitious visit ran into stiff competition from her husband's secret mission to North Korea, which drew heavy coverage by the cable news freeing the two journalists and talking with the regime's longtime leader, Kim Jong-il.

It was not immediately clear why Clinton teamed with such ambitious, and she quickly recovered her cool and moved on to other subjects on Monday.

Clinton is in the middle of a marathon 11-day tour of Africa and has held to a grueling schedule of official meetings and private events that have kept her busy from sunrise to well after sunset.

She returned to the public eye in mid-July with what video billed as a major foreign policy address at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. Since then, she has traveled to India and Thailand and now to seven nations in Africa.

Hours after she left Washington for Africa last week, news broke that Bill Clinton had gone on the humanitarian mission to North Korea to win the release of Lisanna Ling and Euna Lee, two television journalists who had been arrested there and sentenced to 12 years of hard labor.

Hillary Clinton arrived in Kenya to find herself peppered with questions about her role in the secret mission to North Korea. AP

Strong quakes shake Japan, India

TOKYO—TWO POWERFUL earthquakes struck Asia early Tuesday, killing two and injuring dozens in coastal Japan and sending panicked residents into the streets as tsunami warnings were issued for countries skirting the Indian Ocean that was devastated by a deadly 2004 quake and tsunami.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the first quake, registering magnitude 7.6, hit the Indian Ocean about 257 kilometers north of Port Blair in India's Andaman Islands. A tsunami watch was called for India, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh, but was later lifted.

P. Ramakrishnan, a police official in Port Blair, said there were no injuries or damage caused by the quake.

"But people ran out of their homes in fear as they remembered the 2004 tsunami," he said, referring to waves ravaged by a magnitude-9.0 earthquake that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries around the Indian Ocean.

The quake was centered at a depth of 53 km, the USGS said. An aftershock measuring 6.4 struck the same area 15 minutes later at a depth of 33 km.

In Japan, one person was killed and several dozen injured when a 6.8-magnitude quake hit Tokyo and nearby areas on the coast of Izu-shoto on Tuesday, halting trains and forcing two nuclear reactors to shut down for safety checks.

Police said a 61-year-old woman was killed by falling debris and at least 65 people were injured. Japan's public broadcaster, NHK, reported that more than 60 people suffered minor injuries.

Japan's Meteorological Agency—which downgraded the quake from magnitude 6.8—also issued a tsunami warning, but the was later lifted. The quake was centered off Suruga Bay, southwest of Tokyo, at a depth of 10 km.

A BOY rides a bike past a damaged house gate at a Shinto shrine in Yaizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, on Tuesday. AP

The two quakes—though likely not related—hit about 10 minutes apart.

"The shaking was quite strong, even here. It wasn't the usual little ones," said Mitsuharu Wakamori, a police official in Atobi, about 110 km west of the Japanese quake's center.

Two reactors at the Hamaoka nuclear power plant were temporarily halted for safety checks. Reactors are automatically shut down whenever a quake of a certain strength is registered.

The reactors prompted Central Japan Railway Co. to briefly stop operations at Shinkansen bullet trains, and some local trains were still out of service hours later, the company said.

A magnitude-8.4 quake also rattled the region on Sunday, but caused no damage or casualties. The USGS measured it as magnitude 7.1.

Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries, and experts believe Tokyo has a 90-percent chance of being hit by a major quake over the next 50 years.

In 1995, a magnitude-7.2 quake in the western port city of Kobe killed 6,400 people.

Kazuyuki Abe, a Tokyo University seismology professor, said experts were studying what the Tuesday's quake could foreshadow a major quake, but they were downgraded by an earthquake in 1923.

"We are closely monitoring the developments and examining any changes in the region," he said. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

JFK sister Eunice Shriver dies at 88

HYANNIS, Massachusetts—President John F. Kennedy's sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who carried on the family's public service tradition by founding the Special Olympics and championing the rights of the mentally disabled, died Tuesday morning, her family said in a statement. She was 88. Its cause was unclear and added, Shriver was stricken with a debilitating illness in recent years. Peter Collier, author of "The Kennedys: an American Drama," called Eunice Shriver the "second force" of the Kennedy family. AP

Thai court rejects US extradition request

BANGKOK—A Thai court on Tuesday rejected a US request to extradite an alleged Russian arms smuggler dubbed the "Merchant of Death," dealing a setback to American efforts to try him on charges of plotting to supply arms to Colombian rebels. Viktor Bout, 42, was arrested in March 2008 at a luxury room in Bangkok as part of an elaborate sting in which US agents posed as arms buyers for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which Washington classifies as a terrorist organization. He is being held in a Bangkok prison. AP

Ex-German officer convicted of WWII killings

MUNICH—A 88-year-old former German Army officer has been convicted of murder in the killings of Italian civilians during World War II. The Munich state court on Tuesday sentenced Josef Scheungraber to life in prison. Presiding Judge Manfred Gaeb said the conviction on 10 counts of murder and further charges of attempted murder. Scheungraber was a 25-year-old Wehrmacht lieutenant at the time of the June 1944 killings in Falzano di Cortona, near the Tuscany town of Arezzo. "The killings came after partisans killed two German soldiers. AP

Kidnapped Chechen activist found dead

MOSCOW—The head of a Chechen aid group and her husband have been found shot dead in the trunk of their car a day after being kidnapped, police and an official of the Russian human rights group Memorial said on Sunday. Memorial's Alexander Cherkasov told The Associated Press that the bodies of Tamara Sadayeva and her husband were found in a suburb of the Chechen capital, Grozny. A Chechen interior ministry spokesperson said the bodies had gunshot wounds to the head and chest. AP

Cuba says toilet paper running short

HAVANA—Cuba, in the grip of a serious economic crisis, is running short of toilet paper and says not get sufficient supplies until the end of the year, state media reported. The government said Monday that it has been slowing the prices of 24 basic goods to help Cubans get through the difficulties provoked in part by the global financial crisis and three destructive hurricanes that struck the island last year. Reuters

Psychos have faulty brain connections

LONDON—Psychopaths who kill and rape have faulty connections between the part of the brain dealing with emotions and that which handles decision-making, scientists have found. In a study 12 psychopaths who had committed murder, manslaughter, multiple rape, strangulation and false imprisonment, the British scientists found that loads linking the two crucial brain areas had "potholes," while those of normal psychopaths were in good shape. Reuters

Al-Qaida eyes new Taliban chief in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD—AL-QAIDA WANTS to choose the next Pakistani Taliban leader to replace Baitullah Mehsud, a top Pakistani official said—a move that could help the seven-group extremist network survive the Afghan border.

Pakistani and American officials are confident Mehsud died in a CIA missile strike last Wednesday in the South Waziristan tribal region, despite Taliban denials. Militants are said to have been meeting in recent days to determine Mehsud's successor.

One commander, Hakimullah, who uses only one name, phoned The Associated Press on Monday and railed against Pakistani government claims that he himself had been killed in deadly infighting among the top commanders to succeed Mehsud. He also insisted the Taliban chief was alive and his supporters unified.

Mehsud's death would be a major blow for the Pakistani Taliban. He had succeeded in bringing various Islamist militant factions under a unified if loose command which posed an unprecedented threat to the Pakistani security forces. Al-Qaida is believed to have

BAITULLAH, a ranking Taliban leader in Pakistan, is feared to succeed Baitullah Mehsud, who was killed in a CIA missile strike last week. AP

been key to a key ally.

Pakistani intelligence officials and Taliban sources have said over the weekend that Arab fighters as well as Afghan Taliban joined shuras, or meetings, held by local militants' commanders in South Waziristan to discuss who should succeed Mehsud.

"Al-Qaida is getting grouped in the same place, and now they are trying to find out somebody to succeed him in the leader, as the chief terrorist, in that area," Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik told BBC radio.

He later told a private Pakistani TV station that al-Qaida "are trying to bring someone who is more acceptable to the others effectively for them. Those who were investing money in them must be attempting to bring the man of their choice."

The unity of the Pakistani Taliban concerns al-Qaida because the strongest the Pakistani militant outbreak, "the greater the ability of al-Qaida people is to be able to hide, to be able to move around," said Fahmidullah Yousafzai, a Pakistani journalist and expert on the Taliban. AP

Watchdog says bad assets still threaten banks

WASHINGTON—DESPITE HOPES that the financial system has stabilized, banks remain threatened by billions of dollars of bad loans and slow balance sheets, and more could fail if the economy worsens, a congressional watchdog reports.

In its latest assessment of the $700-billion financial system bailout, the Congressional Oversight Panel warns that banks still hold many risky kinds of investment rather than lending to creditworthy clients. It says employment rises sharply or the commercial real estate market collapses—as many economists fear—the banking system could again lose its footing, the panel says in a report to be released on Tuesday.

The Congressional Oversight Panel was created as part of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). It is designed to provide an additional layer of oversight, beyond the Special Inspector General for the TARP and regular audits by the Government Accountability Office.

The panel's draft report says many of the Obama administration's financial stability efforts are working. But with banks still holding the assets at the heart of the crisis, many remain vulnerable, the panel says.

Small banks are especially vulnerable. The troubled assets weighing on their balance sheets generally are in the form of complex loans, as opposed to the mortgage-backed securities formed from bundles of mortgage loans that have been divided up.

The treasury department's main program for buying up bad assets, however, currently targets only those securities and not the so-called "whole" loans.

In addition, the report says, regional and smaller banks hold greater numbers of commercial real estate loans, "which pose a potential threat of high defaults."

It said the adequacy of small banks' capital cushions against losses hasn't been tested by the government, which performed "stress tests" in May only on the 19 biggest US banks—including Bank of America Corp., Citigroup Inc., GMAC, Goldman Sachs Group Inc., JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Wells Fargo & Co.

Owners of shopping malls, hotels and offices have been declining on their loans as asset values rose, and the commercial real estate market isn't expected to hit bottom for three more years, industry experts have warned. Delinquency rates on commercial loans have doubled in the past year to 7 percent as more companies struggle with recession. Commercial mortgages, according to the Federal Reserve.

The commercial real estate market's fortunes are tied closely to the economy, especially unemployment, which registered 9.4 percent last month. As people lose their jobs, or have their hours reduced, they cut back on spending, which hurts retailers, and take fewer trips, affecting hotels. AP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Queaño

A RESCUER rescues a baby in southern Taiwan

Hundreds dead, missing as typhoons lash Asia

CHISHAN, TAIWAN—TYPHOONS PUMMELING EAST ASIA HAVE killed at least 61 people, with rescuers in Taiwan hunting to find survivors of a mudslide that may have buried about 300 villagers, officials said on Tuesday.

A total of 61 people were confirmed dead in Taiwan after Typhoon "Morakot" inundated the island's worst flooding in half a century over the weekend.

Morakot lashed Taiwan with three metres of rain, submerging entire towns and bringing down bridges.

At least 20 more also killed as landslides and flooding wreaked a trail of destruction in China and Japan, where officials feared more damage after a powerful earthquake hammered rain-soaked general southeast of Tokyo.

The Taiwanese government's National Fire Agency said "about 300 people may have been buried alive" in the remote village of Hsiaolin, which could only be reached by helicopter with all road access to the mountainous area severed.

"My house is gone. We have been trapped for four days and we are scared," one man from Hsiaolin told reporters after being airlifted to safety out of the submerged village in case here Taiwan.

With another 62 people missing, rescue missions were in full swing with authorities rushing out helicopters to remote areas to the center and south of the island cut off by the fallen bridges and raging rivers.

Rescuers said they had airlifted a total of 134 people to safety in southern Taiwan including about 70 from Hsiaolin.

Bad weather has made the rescue missions doubly treacherous. Taiwanese TV cameras said a helicopter carrying five crew members and a nurse on Tuesday crashed into a mountain. The helicopter was spotted lying in a valley.

The helicopter was flying to Sanshimen, a mountainous region in southern Pingtung county in southern Taiwan, where thousands of people remained trapped in three coastal townships without electricity or drinking water.

The Apple Daily said one man in a flooded Pingtung town had single-handedly rescued about 100 people with a bamboo raft over the past two days.

In eastern China, a massive landslide triggered by torrential rain from Morakot toppled seven older houses in one town, killing two people and injuring four, firefighters and residents said.

The four-story buildings collapsed around 10 p.m. on Monday night in the town of Fengxi in the coastal province of Zhejiang, which lies south of Taiwan.

Local resident Tang Chenghui, whose house sits opposite the collapsed buildings, said he was startled awake by the landslide.

"At about 10 o'clock at night I heard a very loud noise. I thought it was an earthquake but I saw through the window that the old buildings had fallen down," Tang said.

"When I saw what had happened, I left home and tried to help in the rescue."

Mudslides has left an additional six people dead and three missing in the Chinese mainland, the civil affairs ministry said late Monday.

The typhoon also destroyed more than 6,000 houses.

Japan, following a 6.5 magnitude tremor, rushed soldiers and hundreds of troops after Typhoon "Etau" brought floods and landslides that killed at least 18 people and left 18 missing, police and officials said.

Heavy downpours have drenched Japan since the weekend and caused flooding in the storm-hit city of Isuzu, in western Hyogo prefecture, where 12 of the deaths were reported after a swollen river burst its banks.

On Tuesday, Etau was spotted churning through the Pacific Ocean but veering east and away from Japan's coasts.

The typhoon, packing winds of up to 126 kilometers per hour, had originally been forecast to veer close to the densely populated region around Tokyo.

Japan's weather agency issued an alert for more "possible landslides and unknown disasters" in the quake-hit areas, warning that the water-soaked earth may be unstable after being jolted by the strong tremor.

Reports from AFP and AP

A YOUNG girl clutches her brother after they escape the fury of Typhoon "Morakot."

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo ■ Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

BSP reports seven-fold rise in FDI inflows

Year-on-year increase bodes well for RP

By Michelle F. Baroo

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTments posted a net inflow of $379 million in May, in what monetary officials said was an indication the economy would weather the crisis this year without sinking into recession.

"These inflows were more than seven times higher than the year-ago level, and reflected the favorable sentiment of foreign investors following earlier signs of stabilization in the global economy," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement yesterday.

According to the BSP, net inflow of FDIs stood at only $50 million in May last year.

In the first five months of the year, total net inflow of FDIs reached $1.423 billion, up 86 percent from $552 million in the same period a year ago.

One of the biggest sources of FDI was the equity infusion of Japanese firm Kirin Holdings Corp. to beverage giant San Miguel Brewery.

Earlier reports said that, under an agreement between the two parties, Kirin increased its stake in San Miguel to 49.3 percent after buying an additional 3.06 percent stake in the company for P6.09 billion ($143 million).

Apart from manufacturing, other sectors that benefited from inflows of FDIs in the first five months were real estate, construction, financial intermediation, and trade and commerce.

The Philippines saw a decline in foreign investments—both portfolio and direct—sharply after the United States tank into a recession. The US economic turmoil had affected even appetite for investments in emerging economies like the Philippines.

But according to officials, risk appetite has gradually been improving amid signs that the world economy is on its way to stabilization.

Tetangco said reports of gradual move.

BSP/B2

RP shipments picked up in June, says NSO

PHILIPPINE SHIPMENTS, WHICH HAVE been battered by a slump in global trade, showed signs of a rebound in June, data showed Tuesday with analysts seeing a pickup in exports in the second half.

Exports rose 18.4 percent from the previous month as demand around the world for the country's key electronics picked up, according to the National Statistics Office.

Although the $3.41 billion in June shipments was 24.7 percent lower year-on-year, it was still better than the 26.9-percent drop in May, giving hopes a recovery from the exports slump that began in October a weeks ago.

"The good news is that, month-on-month, exports are growing," said Ernesto Santiago, president of Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc.

"They have been going up since January," said Santiago, whose association represents the country's top exporters.

He told MB he expects export figures in the last quarter to show a year-on-year rise, which would extend into 2010.

April Lee Tan of Oriental Commodities said the recovery of exports appeared to be sustainable, citing a pick-up in imports.

Imports for May, the latest figures available, were $3.62 billion, down 29.3 percent year-on-year but up 15.9 percent from the previous month.

April saw imports plunging a record 37.4 percent year-on-year.

Many of the country's exports rely on imported components, and an upturn in imports is often a sign of a coming rise in active trading overseas markets including the United States and Europe.

"With the US economy showing signs of stabilization, there is a greater chance that

BP SHIPMENTS/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱47.71 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 11, 2009

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY closed 0.25 percent higher in mixed trading with selected blue-chips rising significantly, dealers said.

The composite index gained 0.86 points to 2,963.54 points, while the all-shares index rose 0.32 percent to 1,813.28 points.

There were 67 gainers and 45 losers, while 65 stocks were unchanged.

SHARES/B2

When ₱500 equals 13

THE SHOWBIZ SENTINEL PRO Pilipinas proudly dongles the country's book intros based on showbiz, sexiness and security considerations.

And even though press bills are loaded with symbolisms, the BSP certainly isn't in the habit of consulting gremlinmeters, astrologers or occultists before floating those dongles.

But maybe it should.

According to a senior and very distinguished member of the business community, a simple redesign of the P500 bill may help change the country's fortunes.

This businessman believes identity we will keep more for now) said that adding the face of the late President Cesazon Aquileo on the reflow note will change the bad long feel about caused by the presence of 13 people in both sides of the bill. (OK, go ahead and count them.)

The BSP should also redesign the note to change the number of "500," schools appears. 13 times on a single note I get cross again while we work).

Incidentally, one of the last bandits on either side of the P500 bill also has 13 stars.

All these add on long-running urban legends about the "bad luck bill," chief of which is the negative feng shui associated with having a ghost-looking Ninoy (with the supposed malevolent of having his shin resting on his hand).

Apparently, however, there are also countbooks away inside those cutting cases and bonding removed by which the BSP should consider to helping the Philippine economy grow, right? Dustin L. Lucas

High stakes poker

PHILIPPINE LUBIC Distance Telephone Co. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan and San Miguel Corp. president Ramon S. Ang are playing a high stakes poker game with precious stocks as the pyrite.

Both Mr. San Miguel and Mr. Pangilinan have productory and shrugging off the image of being a passive investor wishing to be bought out of Manila Electric Co., MVP's group itself is believed to be gearing up to boom its market share. Apart from the cash dividend that PLDT will pay out this September to shareholders (thus clearing up the coffers of First Pacific Co. Ltd.), the group is busy sweetening ratios to handsome to make sure the remaining 11.4-percent stake held by the Lopez clans won't fall into the hands of its rival.

As for the "Highlander" movies, "there can only be one" version. And whoever emerges on top may end up with a payday victory, according to some stock analysts. They said the stakes could actually be somewhat too thinly sold might find it hard to sell all the shares they've stock.

There's also the possibility—however remote, for now—that San Miguel and PLDT will come to terms and co-exist peacefully.

The latter, of course, would dampen the excitement in the stock, and in the local market in general.

But for some analysts and the salesmen in stocks bidding war to the Lopez clans, which has been rumored to come to a temporary halt, the potential gain despite its delayed realization, having the chance to cash at least P20 billion in value from its remaining stake. The question remaining is whether it will strike while the iron is hot...or to speak.

In the case of the Santa Santa Ayala and Development stocks—which also both hold a sizeable block of shares in Philex—the current bone of contention—both are in a position to flirt with either side to get the best deal. Doris C. Bumatay

The minority report

BUT APART from the Lopezes, there are outstanding indications of investors in Meralco who, if bought out at a premium to market or converted to an ally, may deliver additional voting rights coupled to either side.

The first is the state-owned Government Service Insurance System which, after wisely selling 15 million shares in 2007 at recent peaks (even after giving up 17 percent to San Miguel last last year), may have roughly 4% left in Meralco, representing a 4-percent stake, in Meralco, according to unofficial but fairly reliable industry estimates.

Why has the GSIS kept the stake in its portfolio? Probably it is betting on a broader rally in the stocks within the general upper band.

Industry sources said there's also a supposedly several, but crucial, 4-percent block held by foreign groups Barclays and Templeton, which had given their proxies to the Lopezes during the annual stockholders meeting early this year.

The proxies were supposed to have been equally shared by MVP and SMC, as these foreign institutional investors were friendly to both sides. But because of a gentlemen's agreement not to engage in a proxy war at that time, the proxies were lodged with the Lopezes.

The question is, has either side entered the Barclays/Templeton block as allies?

The deal has become so fuzzy that the more conservative fund managers have given up bothering on it. Doris C. Bumatay

When Citigroup was Citibank

WHAT DOES one do when Bloomberg almost all an institution who turns in crumbling "Bum your things used to be" and tell prospective employees, sort of jokingly, "so why are you still there?"

In the case of Citigroup country manager Sarah Salazar, the solution was to grin and bear it and take everything on the chin.

This was the scene last Wednesday evening, when Citigroup's alumni of Citibank—the country's so-called "University of Banking"—held a grand reunion in Makati City. (See first one since the early 1980s).

Speakers CBP president Shay Harold, former Monetary Board member Teddy Thomas, Rico Properties chief Danny Ignacio and BSP consultant Alex Erlander took turns recalling the good old days and lamenting (to just—again) what a the cry the personal Citigroup is from the old Citibank (including the precipitous fall of the bank's stock price to single-digit levels).

The alumni even drove home their point by hanging onstage a large tarp (a printed tarpaulin), not the US government's "TARP" bailout program (ahuh Citi another of!) showing the old Citibank blue-and-white logo instead of the new red umbrella design.

The hosts made sure, however, not to cut too close to the bone and gave Salazar generous wiggle room to expound on Citigroup's current recovery moves, and Salazar, ever so gracious, heaped praise on the alumni, including the "celebrities" of the class, the late BSP Governor Pamg Buenaventura, who was the highest-ranked Filipino ever in Citibank. Dustin L. Lucas

Town under the MP ticket?

PRESIDENTIAL cousin Monroy Villar made a surprise appearance during Finance Secretary Margarito "Gary" Teves' Rotary Club of party lunch at the Land Bank Plaza last week. But he might have dropped by not just to greet the fiscal manager.

Villar relished the finance chief off to a 45-minute, closed door meeting, slipping away quietly as the crowd was enthralled with Teves' sister Rebel Laurel (Raja Laurel's mom) and nephew John Teves Laurel who were jamming with the band like pros. "It's private and confidential," was all Teves could say when he emerged from the meeting.

So, is it looks like the hardworking bar has-boy Teves, long rumored to be interested in jumping back to politics (but not back to Congress), may be considering to run as part of the Nationalist Party's remaining ranks. Doris C. Bumatay

PITC

Philippine International Trading Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BRAND NEW

14.5mm ARTILLERY TRAINING DEVICE AND AMMUNITION

Bid Ref No. 2009 -061

1. The Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC) and Philippine Army (PA) intend to apply the sum of FOUR BILLION EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY FOUR THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FIFTY & PESOS (Php 4,884,081,150) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BRAND NEW 14.5mm ARTILLERY TRAINING DEVICE AND AMMUNITION (One Lot), more particularly described as follows:

Item	Quantity	Description	ABC (Php) Reference Number/Date	Contract Duration	Bid Security (with 10%MRTC) (Php)	Bid Security (Bank guarantee) (2.5%)	Bid Security (Surety Bond) (5%)	Cost of Bid Documents
1.	1 Lot	14.5mm Artillery Training Device (Live Ammo)	₱1,000,000.00	60+(730) days from receipt of Ltr. Intent	₱48,840.00	₱1,221.00	₱2,442.00	₱1,000.00
2.	1,000 rds	Cartridge 14.5mm Ammunition	₱3,883,081.50					
		Total	₱4,884,081.50					

*Only those issued by a licensed bank or surety or a cashier's bank

2. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.

3. PITC AND PA now invite duly bids from eligible Bidders for SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BRAND NEW 14.5mm ARTILLERY TRAINING DEVICE AND AMMUNITION (LOCSS) (One Lot). Delivery of the SUPPLIES is required to strictly FOB (shipping point) basis from receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP) by the supplier. (Terms of payment shall be by irrevocable letter of credit). The Implementation of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PITC, 2nd Floor, Philippine International Trading Corporation Building, 1344 Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila (Tel. No. 524-0961 to 70 loc. 2101 to 2104).

4. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the IRR of R.A. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

5. The Bidding is open only to Local and Foreign manufacturers. However, Foreign manufacturers must be represented by a Philippine based company with at least two (2) year experience in the importation or supply of ammunition and weapons and must submit valid licenses or valid licenses and authorization (for sale to the AFP) issued by the Philippine National Police (PNP).

6. Only duly licensed Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be allowed to purchase the Bidding Documents. Bidders must be eligible check in accordance to Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidder (ITB)(BAC). The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall be required to submit the post-qualification steps in order to finally determine the compliance of the bid to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedures.

7. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BAC Secretariat on 5th Avenue Corner of 25th ADC Building, 7th Infantry Division, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila (Tel. No. 840-2000 loc. 2101 to 2104) and inspect the Bidding Documents from 13 July 2009 to 31 July 2009, Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

8. Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated above. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidders or the duly authorized representative.

9. PITC-BAC shall have a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on August 10, 2009 at 1:00 PM at 5th ADC Building, 7th Infantry Division, Fort Bonifacio Village, Makati City.

10. Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted to the designated Bid Box located at PITC Lobby, ADC Building, 7th Infantry Division, Fort Bonifacio Village, Makati City on or before September 2, 2009 at 10:00AM. Late bids shall not be accepted.

11. Bid opening shall be on September 2, 2009 at 10:00AM at 5th ADC Building, 7th Infantry Division, Fort Bonifacio Village, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend. Prospective Bidders may submit their quotation, if any, in writing to facilitate expeditious bidding, or to send their representatives who may submit their quotation at any of the designated bid box. Bids must be valid for 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

12. PITC reserves the right to waive any formality in the requirements of the eligibility requirements and to the invitation. PITC further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or portions thereof, including, or not to award the contract, and makes no assurances that the contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation without thereby incurring any liability to any Bidder and with Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Sgd. MA. VICTORIA C. MALLARE
Chair, BAC-II Awards Committee

PITC-August 12, 2009

BPOs to soak up office space oversupply by 2010

Big industry players seen to continue expansion

By Dustin L. Lucas

THE OVERSUPPLY IN THE REAL-estate industry's office space will likely turn into a shortage by the middle of next year, after the last crop of office space launched in the pre-crisis days of 2008 are completed.

In a briefing, officials of property consultancy Chris Araneta Leng Lasallo Lucchin (ALL) also noted that the Philippines was one of the few countries in the region where demand for office space continues to grow.

"Unlike many other places, we are not experiencing any real slowdown in demand here, thanks to a robust business process outsourcing industry and other players ready to absorb new projects," ALL country head Daniel Lucchin told reporters.

Local developers, developers and investors focused on this market were likely to expect, since a boost in big movers in the office segment continue to expand in or relocate their businesses in the Philippines.

"We still continue to have cheap real estate in Metro Manila and Cebu only until mid-2010," Lucchin said. "Prices may climb rapidly by the end of [next year] as supply dries up."

Of the projected demand of 2,115,000 square meters of office space from now until the end of the year, BPO firms accounted for 38 percent while 11 percent represents the requirements of banks.

The entry of so-called "taipans"—global firms now undertaking their own BPO functions—is a key development in the industry. These firms include JPMorgan Chase, Deutsche Bank, HSBC and Citibank.

These "captive" companies are likely to outsource "non-core" work which is carried out during the day and is more attractive to workers.

These firms are also more likely to set up operations in Metro Manila and Cebu.

In the meantime, third-party BPO firms that are considered by larger players to undertake certain functions are more likely to relocate their facilities to the provinces.

Lucchin said this trend is motivated by economies of scale as the cost of labor in provincial areas is lower than in Metro Manila—a desire presently hampered by the shortage of office space in the provinces.

"BPOs can no longer wait 12 to 18 months for new space in income available outside Metro Manila," he said, even as he encouraged more development of BPO sites outside the metropolis to balance development.

Overall, Lucchin noted a significant shift in confidence in the industry as office space demand in Metro Manila and Cebu continued to be stimulated by the market.

He was particularly optimistic about developments in the Bonifacio Global City suburb is one of the areas in Metro Manila where vacancy rates are low and new office space will be available up to 2011.

In addition, declining prices of construction materials and lower interest rates seem to further prime investments in the development of new projects that have been previously shelved to 2008 and early 2009, he said.

RP to miss export target, economist says

By Abigail L. Ho

WITH THE ECONOMIES OF ITS BIGGEST trading partners still sluggish, the country is likely to miss its 2009 export projection, according to a University of the Philippines economist.

Former Budget Secretary and UP School of Economics professor Benjamin Diokno said that for the government to hit its target of a 15.1% growth decline in exports for the year, merchandise exports should grow by 2.8 percent during the second semesters.

But that's unrealistic. "In 10, the country's top exports destinations, is expected to recover, at best, during the fourth quarter of 2009. But since the recovery is expected to be weak, it is unrealistic to expect that it would mean higher demand for Philippine products. In the meantime, the economies of Japan, Germany and the rest of Europe are expected to be sluggish," he said yesterday.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that merchandise exports slid 32.8 percent in the first half to $17.2 billion, from $25.6 billion a year ago.

Diokno said the country's biggest problem is where it came to exports were its heavy reliance on electronics, a sector that had been very badly hit by its economic slump.

"But the demand [for] these products are the least likely to recover soon. That may translate into more factory closures and layoffs," he said.

Electronics accounted for 57.1 percent of total outbound cargoes in June, the NSO said.

Instead of just relying almost completely on electronics exports, Diokno urged local manufacturing industries "to reengineer themselves."

"Just waiting for the return of orders from our export trading partners is too passive. Those who are able to retool their factories to address domestic demand should seriously consider producing for the local market," he said.

BSP reports seven-fold rise in FDI inflows

From page B1

more toward stability would continue to sustain inflows of investments to the Philippines.

The BSP said third and the International Monetary Fund have projected that the Philippine economy would contract this year by 0.8 and 1 percent, respectively. They cited the ill effects of the global crisis on the domestic economy.

Analysts said the Philippines is affected by the turmoil on several channels, including investments, remittances and exports.

The economy measured in terms of gross domestic product, grew by a measly 0.4 percent in the first quarter, the slowest rate in a decade.

Shares close higher

From page B1

Volume totaled 7.37 billion shares worth P3.47 billion (P114.9 million).

"We have been anticipating rhapsodies in the market at this stage because of the significant run-up recently and because valuations are no longer cheap," said April Lee-Tan of Unicorn Online.

Philex Mining Corp. gained 0.38 percent to P43.75, while Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose 0.2 percent to P72.483.

Manila Electric Co. was unchanged at P182.00 while Energy Development Corp. was down 1.16 percent to P4.66. AFP

Aboitiz power unit reports 22% profit decline

By Roy R. Reyes

PUBLICLY-LISTED ABOITIZ POWER Corp. posted a net income of P1.6 billion in the first half of the year, down by 22 percent from its year-ago level of P2.06 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, APC said the decline was due partly to the non-recurring net loss of P260 million during the period.

The amount, it explained, resulted from the revaluation of dollar-denominated loans and placements of the parent company and some of its associate companies, as well as the one-time expenses related to the acquisition of First Midland geothermal plants.

APC said its power generation business also registered a 21-percent drop in income to P1 billion from year-ago level, even if the total attributable power sold during the period was 36-percent higher.

As of end-June 2009, the company's attributable capacity was already at 1,840 MW, posting a 113-percent expansion year on year. The increase was due to the issuance of the 175-MW Ambuklao-Binga hydro power plants in July 2008 and the 482-MW Tiwi-Makban geothermal power plants in May 2009.

For its power distribution segment, APC said the group's electricity sales for the first six months of the year grew by 5 percent to 1,603 gWh from a year-ago level of 1,531 gWh.

Power consumption of both residential and commercial consumers improved by 7 percent and 4 percent, respectively, on the back of an improved customer base.

Despite the volume growth recorded, the distribution group's income contribution for the period fell 17 percent to P637 million.

"The lower earnings can be attributed mainly to the under recovery of one of purchased power by APC distribution utilities in March 2009, which resulted from the increase in the National Power Corp.'s grid rates," APC explained.

Qatar Telecom acquires 32% stake in Liberty

By Doris C. Dumlao

QATAR TELECOM QSC, THE SOLE telecommunications provider in Qatar, yesterday acquired a 32.5 percent stake in dominant libery Telecommunications Holdings Inc. for about P1.36 billion, announcing its partnership with diversifying San Miguel Corp.

About 426.8 million shares changed hands via a special block sale at the Philippine Stock Exchange at P3.20 per share, dealers said. No official disclosure was made as of press time but industry sources confirmed to the Inquirer that the block was bought by Qtel.

The shares were crossed by brokerage Gilbaco Securities.

In its regular trading, the price of Liberty shares was up by 7.69 percent to close at P3.00 yesterday. The stock has a market capitalization of P1.36 billion.

The transaction puts Qtel's interest in Liberty almost at par with the equity stake held by SMC. Earlier, SMC bought 32.5 percent of Liberty for P1.369 billion as part of its foray into the highly competitive telecommunications business.

While Qtel has already established its presence in Liberty earlier on, it was not able to increase its 32 percent stake in the stock because of the four-year trading suspension on Liberty. The suspension was lifted only recently.

The company earlier approved an increase in its authorized capital stock to P6.6 billion from P3 billion, in line with the recapitalization program, the board also allowed key shareholders to subscribe to new preferred shares at P1 per share.

SMC and Qtel plan to groom Liberty into a leading telecommunication company in the country with voice calls and short messaging system as "bread and butter" earning income businesses. Although the telecom industry is widely perceived as a maturing business, they see a big potential in getting a share of the market especially given the high attrition rate among subscribers of leading players.

SMC formally applied to acquire a controlling stake in another telco, Express Telecommunications Co.

Philex doubles profit goal

PHILEX MINING CORP HAS DOUbled its net income target for 2009 to P1 billion, from the P515 billion set earlier, due to stronger gold and copper prices.

In 2008, Philex posted P2.8 billion in profit.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Philex vice president for finance Nonato Magsino said the higher projection was based on the prevailing prices of $900 per ounce of gold and $2.50 per pound of copper.

Philex also announced the extension of its Padcal mine's projected operating life from 2014 to 2017, based on the proven reserves of the mine as of June 30, 2009 of 74 million tons.

Philex booked a net income of P1.2 billion in the first half of 2009, 45 percent lower than the P2.2 billion posted a year ago. The mine mainly due to lower volumes and the implementation of the Philex spreadsheet income tax holiday.

TVIRD generates $5.1M from copper shipment

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PHILIPpines) Inc., the local affiliate of Canadian mining firm TVI Pacific Inc., has earned $5.1 million for its 80th shipment of copper concentrates to MRI Trading AG.

Completed on Aug. 6, the shipment involved 2,317 dry metric tons (DMT) of copper concentrates, shipped under an offtake agreement with MRI.

For this shipment, the fifth under the agreement, MRI remitted $5.1 million to TVIRD, representing 90 percent of the initial estimated value of the cargo, minus applicable deductions.

According to the two companies' offtake agreement, "the final payments for the remaining sale price of the concentrates to the mine the final details relating to the weight, assays and prices are determined."

As with earnings from the first four shipments, TVIRD said in a statement that it would use proceeds from this delivery to fund working capital and debt service.

To date, TVIRD's Tantoangan del Norte Concession—which has produced about 20,000 DMT of copper concentrates. Of this, 20,441 DMT had been shipped in accordance with the TVIRD-MRI offtake deal.

Pending final assay tests and prices, the past five copper concentrates shipments had so far earned for TVIRD some $27 million in revenue.

On July 9, MRI remitted $525,314; and $941,897, net of bank charges, to TVIRD, representing the 11th payment balance from the second and third shipments of copper concentrates.

TVIRD said it expected future shipments of around 3,000 DMT to MRI to take place every four to six weeks, depending on specific shipping and marketing arrangements. —Abigail G. Ayo

Manila Water seeks funds for Laguna, Boracay projects

MANILA WATER CO. HAS ESTIMATED P12 billion for its capital expenditure projects in its concession area in Metro Manila between now and June 2010.

The funding requirement is already covered but the company said it was still looking for funds for its projects in Boracay and Laguna.

"We already have P10 billion in cash and the rest of the P12 billion can be covered by our cash flow. What we are looking for right now is financing for Boracay and Laguna," CFO Luis Juan B. Oreta said in an interview.

Recently, Manila Water signed a joint venture agreement with the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) to provide water and sewerage services in Boracay, a popular tourist destination.

The company also acquired a water supply deal for the city of Sta. Rosa and the municipalities of Biñan and Cabuyao in Laguna.

The Boracay project will entail an investment of P1.2 billion, while the Laguna project will cost P3.5 billion.

"We will not be borrowing the whole P12 billion in one go. Maybe P5 billion at a time," Oreta said.

He said the company was talking to prospective lenders and local sources of funds.

Manila Water is looking for possible bulk water sources that could be developed in five years or more even though the current water supply is still enough, Oreta said.

One interim option for the company is to supply them water from Laguna Lake through a P5 billion water treatment project. This could be a cheaper option for the company than the proposed scheme for Laiban dam project, which will cost P47-55 billion.

Oreta said the company was also looking for other water sources. He said that having smaller water sources may be more effective in keeping tariffs under control than having to buy huge amounts of water that may not be used.

"There are many potential sources," he said.

Manila Water is on track to posting high single-digit profit growth this year, as first half net earnings grew 16 percent to P1.5 billion from a year ago.

The company said in a report that the increase in earnings was brought about by the "stable growth in core revenue, and better tax and operating efficiency."

Water sales volume hit 194.4 million cubic meters.

Water sales increased by 7 percent from 97.6 mcm in the first quarter to 104.43 mcm in the second quarter of the same year. —Jhesa P. Gilbaltierra

DOE extends SC 51 subphase

THE DEPARTMENT OF Energy has approved the extension of the third sub-phase exploration program under Service Contract (SC) 51, a consortium member Team Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp. said.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Team Asia Oil said the program for the East Cebu area in South Block A will run 18 months or up to Dec. 8, 2010.

Team holds a 6.67 percent participating interest in SC 51, which is being operated by Australian firm Otto Energy Ltd., through its wholly-owned subsidiary Southern Energy Ltd. NorAsian holds an 80 percent working interest in the service contract.

With the extension, Otto Energy said it planned to drill an exploratory well during the extended third sub-phase.

SC 51 covers some 332,000 hectares over the East Visayan basin. The area consists of the northern and southern parts which are separated by a distance of about 80 kilometers. The large Aupec and Bahay prospects are located in the south block, with more than nine additional leads recently defined from modern 2D and 3D seismic data.

In the fourth quarter of 2008, Otto had undertaken preparatory site surveys of the proposed Aupec 1 and Bahay 1 drilling locations in the East Visayan Basin, which have a combined potential of as much as 200 million barrels of recoverable oil.

Otto earlier said it was in discussions with prospective partners who would likely take up an interest in SC 51. It said prospective partners are expected to participate in the drilling of the exploration wells on a "promote" basis.

A unit of Philippine Investment Management Inc., Team Asia is a member or partner of the different groups operating five oil-mining production service contracts in the country.

The service contracts also include SC 6 (Cadlao contract area, block A and block B) in northwest Palawan; SC 14 (Tara and North Matinloc), also in northwest Palawan; SC 55 in offshore west Palawan; and SC 63, in Area 3, Masbate basin. —Arvin R. Reyes

RLC raises ₱5B from bond issue

THE DOMESTIC MARKET SNAPPED up Robinsons Land Corp.'s new retail bond offering, allowing the Gokongwei property development arm to raise P5 billion in an interest rate lower than that on its recent issuance.

RLC's five-year and seven-year bond was priced at 9.25 percent per year, to yield to more than P12 billion, four times the original offering of P3 billion, banking sources said yesterday. As such, the issue size was increased to P5 billion, the maximum allowed by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The yield on this latest bond issue was lower than the 9.5 percent per year rate obtained during RLC's prior bond offering last month.

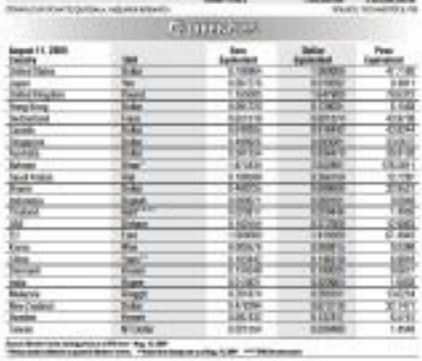
The company told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that it had obtained from the SEC the pre-effective order to sell these additional fixed rate bonds dated Aug. 10.

The proceeds from the bond issue will be used for RLC's capital expenditures.

The lead issue manager was British bank HSBC, while ATR Capital Investment Corp., BDO Capital & Investment Corp. and SB Capital Corp. served as joint lead managers.

The bond issue carries the highest credit rating of PRS Aaa by Philippine Ratings Services Corp. (PhilRatings), indicating that the debt issue is of the highest quality with minimal credit risk and that the issuer's capacity to meet its financial obligations is extremely strong. In assigning the rating, PhilRatings took into account RLC's consistent robust operating profit and strong cash flow from its diverse portfolio of real estate assets.

RLC, the real estate arm of JG Summit Holdings Inc., is one of the Philippines' leading real estate developers in terms of revenue, number of projects and total project size. Doris C. Dumlao



Higher inflation may prompt BSP to hike rates in '09

By Doris C. Dumlao and Michelle V. Ramos

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) has likely ended its cycle of interest rate cuts but may still have room to slash the reserve requirement on funds by 2 percentage points in the fourth quarter this year, an economist at Deutsche Bank Group's HSBC Ltd. said.

At the same time, the bank's Hong Kong-based economist Frederic Neumann said he no longer sees remittances to the Philippines resuming this year, citing resiliency of remaining economies where many overseas Filipino workers are based.

He had earlier predicted that remittances from overseas Filipino workers would contract by a hefty 20 percent this year from last year's $16.4 billion, on the back of massive layoffs caused by the global economic crisis.

According to Neumann, the Philippines could escape recession this year and next year owing to resilient remittances flows but would have to brace for uncertainties due to the 2010 presidential elections, as well as renewed risks of a spike in global oil prices.

"Inflation will surprise [on] how quickly it will can come back up. By October and November that year it will come back with oil price rising, then pushes up inflation very quickly. Because of that, BSP is unlikely to cut more next week and will probably keep its rates at 4 percent," Neumann said.

"Policy rates have reached the bottom of the cycle," he said.

He said next, he predicted that the BSP would likely shift to a hawkish monetary stance and raise interest rates by around 50 basis points starting with a quarter-point increase at the end of the first quarter.

"We're still at the beginning of a [global] recovery and oil is already at $73 per barrel. I'm worried that with all these fiscal expenditures in Asia, if global growth flares up again, oil prices will bounce back and that's something that has always been challenging for the Philippines, both because of the trade account and inflation," Neumann said.

The Philippines, being a net oil importer, previously suffered from bloated import expenses when global oil prices hit a record high of $147 per barrel last year. This also translated to double-digit inflation rates which gnawed sharply at domestic growth.

But while the BSP will likely pause on its key interest rate cuts, Neumann said the central bank may bring down the reserve requirement by 50 basis points to 200 basis points this year in line with international norms.

Despite a disappointing 0.4 percent growth in gross domestic product in the first quarter, Neumann maintained a positive growth outlook of 1 percent for the Philippines this year. In next year, the growth rate per annum rose to 3 percent.

Despite his rosier outlook on remittances, Neumann said he would continue closely monitoring the data given that some overseas Filipino workers with remaining 12-24 months of contract may simply be unwinding their term and may be unable to renew their contracts because of the global slump.

On the other hand, inflation in the Philippines was projected to average at 3.3 percent this year.

OFW remittances to stay buoyant, says HSBC

RP shipments . . .

From page B1

demand for exports will pick up," Lee Yin told AFP.

Electronics, which accounted for more than half of all exports in June, fell 16 percent year on year in $1.34 billion but registered monthly growth of 7.6 percent, the National Statistics Office said in a statement.

Exports for the first six months were $17.22 billion, down 33.8 percent from the same period in 2008, the office said.

The United States was the biggest customer, with $687.97 million, or 17.8 percent of the total in June, followed by Japan, the Netherlands and China.

Economic Planning Secretary Ralph G. Recto said the expansion of June exports was broad-based as most major commodity groups increased.

"Major economies in Asia also posted month-on-month increases in their respective exports in June 2009, reflecting the positive signs of improvement in the world economic landscape," said Recto, who is also director general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Receipts from the Philippines' second top export, which were still shrunk of apparel and clothing accessories, representing 4.1 percent of total shipments, slid by 19.6 percent year-on-year to $130.08 million. Reuters/ M. Dominguez, AFP

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China factory output misses target

Economic recovery remains fragile, observers note

BEIJING—CHINA REPORTED BELOW-forecast growth in factory output and investment on Tuesday, underlining why senior officials keep reminding markets that the world's third-largest economy is not yet back on a solid footing.

But reports showed signs of perking up, imports of crude oil and iron ore hit record levels and retail sales displayed the sort of strength that policymakers want to see as they strive to nurture domestic demand.

Overall, the barrage of figures indicated that, while growth is moderating after a blistering second quarter, the recovery remains on course and the government can be confident of achieving its goal of 8-percent growth for the whole year.

"We think policymakers in Beijing will be encouraged by this latest round of data that they are on the right track," said Brian Jackson, a Royal Bank of Canada economist in Hong Kong.

"The data show that activity is still picking up in response to strong policy stimulus, but also suggest that the recovery is not getting ahead of itself, which should alleviate concerns about excessive liquidity." The immediate dollar dipped in response to the underwhelming factory output figures, but the Shanghai stock market, which is up nearly 80 percent this year, held its ground. Shares were also close were up 0.3 percent.

"China's policy will not change in the next two months. There will be some fine-tuning, as capital inflows will increase and the central bank needs to drain money out of the system," said Liao Ping, Bank of Communications' chief economist in Shanghai.

China has been leading the world out of the deepest recession in 60 years, fired up by a 4-trillion-yuan ($585 billion) government stimulus package focused on infrastructure and record lending by the country's mainly state-owned banks.

The momentum of that pump-priming lifted industrial output growth to 16.9 percent in the year to July, a nine-month high. Output in the 11.7 percent recording, the National Bureau of Statistics reported.

But it fell well short of forecasts of 11.3-percent growth.

Investment in urban areas in fixed assets such as roads and power plants also disappointed as projects backed by the central and local governments declined. However, sales, which jumped 15.1 percent on the year in July to a record 9.62 million barrels per day as refiners boosted exports and cashed in on retail price hikes in June.

"We believe the July trade [exports] figure is not reliable," said analyst Gordon Kwan of Mizuho Asset Services. "The record number is driven by strong fuel demand and commercial restocking." Oil light crude for September delivery rose 46 cents to $71.06 a barrel, having fallen 33 cents on Monday when it tracked Wall Street losses. Oil has more than doubled from this winter's low $30s but high inventories worldwide have kept prices in check as they suggest still weak demand.

London Brent crude rose 34 cents to $73.84 a barrel. With Tuesday's deluge of China data out of the way, traders will now shift their focus to the pace of demand recovery in hardest hit Western economies, with a slightly brighter economic outlook possibly prompting the BIA to again raise its world oil demand forecasts.

In its July outlook, the EIA raised its 2009 global oil demand projection to 81.85 million barrels per day from the previous forecast of 81.68 million—still well below 2008 levels of 85.41 million bpd. *Reuters*

A LABORER works at a construction site in Beijing Tuesday. China reported below-forecast growth in factory output and investment, underlining why senior officials keep reminding markets that recovery in the world's third-largest economy is not yet on solid ground. REUTERS

Chinese imports push oil prices above $71

SINGAPORE—OIL ROSE ABOVE $71 on Tuesday ending a three-day losing streak on record Chinese oil imports and refinery production helped offset mixed economic data, while traders anticipated key reports on the state of global demand.

China reported below-forecast growth in factory output and investment on Tuesday, but a further pick-up in exports and higher than-expected retail sales, underlining why senior officials keep reminding markets that recovery in the world's third largest economy is not yet on solid ground.

But oil data showed a brighter picture for the world's No. 3 consumer, with imports surging 42 percent on the year in July to a record 9.62 million barrels per day as refiners boosted exports and cashed in on retail price hikes in June.

"We believe the July trade [exports] figure is not reliable," said analyst Gordon Kwan of Mizuho Asset Services. "The record number is driven by strong fuel demand and commercial restocking." Oil light crude for September delivery rose 46 cents to $71.06 a barrel, having fallen 33 cents on Monday when it tracked Wall Street losses. Oil has more than doubled from this winter's low $30s but high inventories worldwide have kept prices in check as they suggest still weak demand.

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In its July outlook, the EIA raised its 2009 global oil demand projection to 81.85 million barrels per day from the previous forecast of 81.68 million—still well below 2008 levels of 85.41 million bpd. *Reuters*

Asian stocks struggle amid gloomy data

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS STRUGGLED to eke out gains on Tuesday as policymakers warned of lingering economic uncertainty and data showed China's recovery may be moderating.

The yen climbed across the board and sterling hit a 13-year low against the Australian dollar, while oil topped $71 a barrel.

Many Asian investors are pinning their hopes on China leading a regional recovery as Western economies continue to sputter, but Chinese data for July showed that although exports rose from June, industrial output did not grow as much as expected.

"The data appear for some moderation in growth in Q3 versus the big gains we saw in Q2. The recovery is still on track, at least at the headline level," said Ben Simpfendorfer, an HSBC China economist in Hong Kong.

Major European stock futures were up 0.3 percent while US equity futures were down 0.05 percent.

Shares in Hong Kong and Shanghai recovered early losses by lunchtime while Tokyo shares hit a 10-month closing high for a fourth consecutive trading day.

The Nikkei only managed a 0.6-percent gain, however, and investors across the region were cautious as Japan, South Korea and Singapore all indicated that the economic outlook was still uncertain despite some signs of improvement.

A firmer yen put pressure on shares of Japanese exporters, pushing car giant Honda Motor down 2.9 percent.

The Bank of Japan kept interest rates steady at 0.1 percent, and said the economy had stopped worsening but was still in a difficult situation. *Reuters*

GM to auction brand new cars online through eBay

SAN FRANCISCO—HUNDREDS OF General Motors' California dealers will let consumers haggle over the prices of new cars and trucks through the eBay online auction place under a trial that begins Tuesday.

About 225 of California's 350 GM dealers are set to take part in the program. They will be selling Buick, Chevrolet, GMC and Pontiac vehicles on refurbished websites through eBay Inc.'s online auto marketplace, eBay Motors, until Sept. 8. The cars will also be available through eBay Motors and eBay's main site.

Although the companies previously said such a trial was in the works, details weren't released until Monday.

The trial is part of Detroit-based General Motor Co.'s turnaround plan, making more official a practice some of its dealers had already participated in on their own. It expands an existing partnership covering 200 certified used vehicles sold through eBay.

It also marks a shift for San Jose, California-based eBay, since most of the vehicles sold on eBay Motors—a site that sells various types of vehicles and auto parts—have traditionally been sold.

Starting Tuesday, eBay visitors will be able to visit Web pages like gm.shopcom and chevy.shopcom, where they can browse over 2000 used 2009 vehicles, ask dozens questions and figure out financing. Below 2010 models also will be available.

The refurbished sites will also include a Web tool currently an eBay Motors that helps shoppers determine if they're qualified to trade in their old car for money toward a new one under the government's just-refilled "cash-for-clunkers" stimulus program.

Car buyers will be able to choose between the two standard options currently offered on eBay Motors: negotiating a price with a dealer through the site or purchasing right then at a fixed price. Cars will be picked up at the dealerships. AP

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Banks set to take on new rules

Risk management system to enhance stability of RP banking

By Michelle V. Rosca

PHILIPPINE BANKS ARE READY to take a new set of risk-management rules that the central bank will implement starting January next year.

The new rules are in keeping with international best practices, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

"All covered banks have already submitted their preliminary compliance documents on ICAAP... Banks are quite cooperative as we think they appreciate the benefits of ICAAP," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said.

Under the ICAAP banks will be required to provide sufficient capital—or other resources—to cover unanticipated types of risks involved in operating a bank. These include reputation risks, strategic risks, interest rate risks, compliance risks, liquidity risks and credit concentration risks.

Currently, the BSP requires banks to maintain a capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of 10 percent. The capital is meant to cover capital types of risks—and it supervises risk, market volatility risk and operational risk.

CAR is the proportion of capital to a bank's risk exposure.

Espenilla said the adoption of the ICAAP in international best practice, would enhance stability of the banking sector.

He said the Philippines could be one of the first countries in Southeast Asia to adopt the ICAAP next year. Only Hong Kong has adopted the process in this part of the world.

Already, the central banks of New Zealand and Australia have required their banking sectors to adopt the ICAAP.

Reputation risks are generally laid down about a bank that could create financial trouble. Bad news has a tendency to encourage depositors to pull out their money from a bank. Given this, the BSP said, banks would be required to put up sufficient capital cover for reputation risks.

Strategic risks, meanwhile, are those that arise from changes in the market environment, while interest rate risks are those that threaten a bank's level of liquidity due to sharp movements of interest rates.

Investor vows to bring flavor back to Figaro

By Rica T. Oktaviano

A GROUP OF INVESTORS NOW AT the helm of Figaro Coffee Systems Inc. is keen on turning the failing company around in one and a half years, infusing P200 million in the process.

According to Mel Ventura, who represents the group of new investors and is acting chief executive of Figaro, funding will cover bank loan payments and expansion expenses.

Figaro owes Banco De Oro some P93 million, and Mercantrade, P3 million, Ventura said. Figaro is negotiating the payment period for the combined loans and said the deadline for payment is "open-ended."

The company also spends P3 million every week to procure supplies for its 65 stores.

Marketing manager Joe Amarga, who used to work with Ventura at the Bromley's Pizza chain, said that 30 of the stores are company-owned and 35 are franchise stores.

The new management installed by the investors are planning to open new Figaro stores. At least six will be opened within 2009. One store costs about P6.5 million to put up, excluding the franchise fee of P1.5 million.

Ventura said funding would all be "out of pocket." The investors, he said, would not take on loans or other fundraising activities.

"It's no risk," Ventura said, referring to the funding. He would not elaborate on where the funding is coming from except that it is "all Filipino" and the investors can shell out "whatever is needed" to turn the company around.

Ventura said the group of investors by reputation were asked for help by the majority owners of Figaro (the Tenseco family) when they had problems with the former management "led by a minority."

Ventura said that the minority shareholders had "interrogated" their three and, if the banks collect on the loans, "then the banks will become our partners."

Petra Arat, who was among the founders of Figaro in 1993, and its long-time chief executive until January 2008, said it was investors that she and Mrs. Regina Francisco (former COO of Figaro) still hold a combined 42 percent share in the company.

Saatchi & Saatchi Execs mark 60th Anniversary of Ace Saatchi & Saatchi

PATRICK Bess

ANDY Greenaway

IAN Rondon

Top brass from global advertising giant Saatchi & Saatchi are in the country for the 60th anniversary of Isaiah and Ace Saatchi & Saatchi.

Ian Reeden, Chairman & CEO for Asia Pacific, leads the visiting executives. He is joined by Patrick Bess, CEO for South East Asia and Andy Greenaway, Regional Executive Creative Director for South East Asia.

While in Manila, Reeden, Bess and Greenaway will meet with the agency's Philippine-based clients to convey their gratitude for their support over the last 60 years and to celebrate this impressive milestone with the entire Manila office.

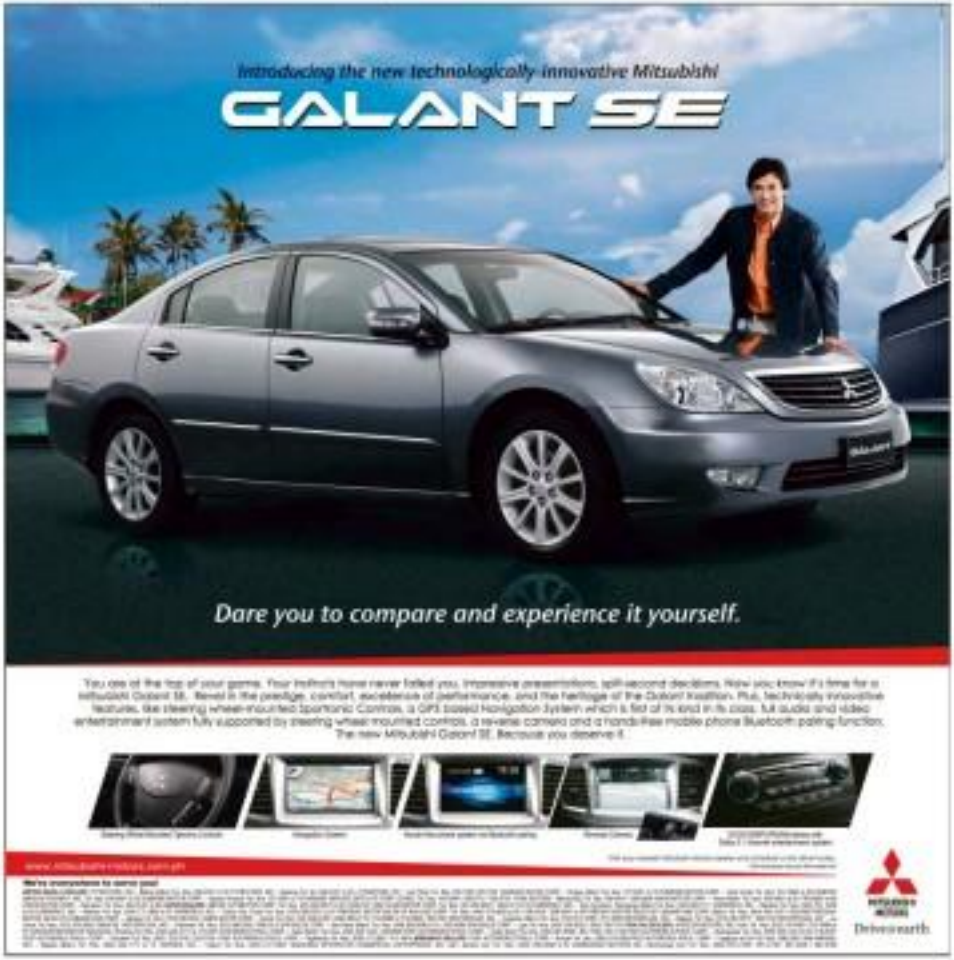
As head of Saatchi & Saatchi in the Asia Pacific region, Reeden leads 17 countries, 25 offices and over 1,800 employees. A 20-year marketing veteran with a career spanning four continents, he was inducted into the American Advertising Federation's Advertising Hall of Achievement in 1998.

Flagship CEO for Saatchi & Saatchi across South East Asia for the last 12 years, Patrick Bess has an intimate knowledge of the region. He has built many of its local offices from the ground-up, and was based in Manila at Ace Saatchi & Saatchi during the 1980s.

Andy Greenaway is ranked as the Number 1 Creative Director in Asia by Campaign Brief Asia. He has held this position five times in the last eight years.

Ace Saatchi & Saatchi was founded in 1948 as Ace Advertising, as Manila embarked on an economic boom after World War II. It later became Ace Compton Advertising, until it partnered with Saatchi & Saatchi in 1982.

One of the Philippines' largest and most-awarded advertising agencies, Ace Saatchi & Saatchi handles market leaders such as Procter & Gamble, Mead Johnson, PLDT and SM Development Corporation. Saatchi & Saatchi is known globally as the "trailblazer for world-changing ideas," and specializes in elevating brands into "Lovemarks," or those that command loyalty beyond reason among consumers.



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INVITATION TO APPLY ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of Agriculture invites qualified bidders to participate in the bidding of "**One (1) unit SERVICE VEHICLE**" with an Approved Budget Control (ABC) PhP 1,000,000.00.

Bid documents shall be available at the BFAR Property Section starting **Aug. 17, 2009** upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php 1,000.00.

Pre-bid Conference will be held on August 28, 2009, 2:00 p.m., BFAR Conference Room, 3rd Fl., PCA Bldg., Elliptical Rd., Diliman, Quezon City.

Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposal in three envelopes shall be submitted to the BFAR-BAC Secretariat, PCA Compound, Diliman, Quezon City, not later than **10:00 A.M.** on **Sept. 7, 2009** and shall be opened on the said schedule and date in the presence of the participating bidders.

For more information, please visit the BAC Secretariat at Tel. No. 455-4048 / 374-7971.

The Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by the BAC is the most advantageous to the government. The BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, or make it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **BALTAZAR I. SARMIENTO, JR.**
Director

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23 August 2009

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

ALL CONCERNED MANUFACTURERS, IMPORTERS, DEALERS, OWNERS, AND/OR DRIVERS OF THREE-WHEELED MOTOR VEHICLES ARE HEREBY INFORMED THAT THE PUBLIC HEARING RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED REGISTERING THE OPERATIONS OF THREE-WHEELED VEHICLES SCHEDULED ON AUGUST 5, 2009 IS MOVED TO AUGUST 26, 2009 AT 10:00 IN THE MORNING AT THE BUSINESS SEA OF THE LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE, EAST AVENUE, QUEZON CITY, DUE TO THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT, HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO, DECLARING AUGUST 5, 2009 AS "NON-WORKING HOLIDAY".

(Sgd.) **ARTURO G. LOMBAAB**
Assistant Secretary

PHILIPPINE MINING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Consulting, Mobility, Accounting Services

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Mining Development Corporation (PMDC) invites all interested Filipino and Foreign mining consultancies or entity to organize and submit sealed bid proposals for a short-listing agreement (SLA) for the exploration, development and mining operations of the PMDC's North Davao Mining Property consisting of 20,107.00 hectares located in Davao, Compostela Valley, Philippines.

Interested parties may initially secure the Eligibility Requirement Documents and Bidding Documents from the address stipulated starting **10 August 2009** up to **7 August 2009** during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) from:

THE SECRETARIAT
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
PHILIPPINE MINING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
2nd-3rd-4th Philippine Stock Exchange Centre West Tower
Exchange Road, Ortigas Center
Pasig City, Philippines

Contact Numbers:	(632) 706 - 1000 to 01 / 706 - 1020 to 30
Fax Number:	(632) 706 - 1031 / 706 - 1032 loc/fax
Contact Persons:	Engr. Laurence Wilson M. Bacolod-Jones Technician D. Rivera
E-mail Address:	pmdc@pmdc.com.ph

The Letter of Intent to participate in the bidding together with the accomplished documents stated in the Eligibility and Invalidation Requirements Checklist for pre-qualification must be submitted/received on or from **04 August 2009 to 11 August 2009** at the above-mentioned address.

Interested bidders may secure the Eligibility Checklist and the Terms of Reference (TOR) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (**PHP3,000.00**). Also available for pre-qualified bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (**PHP5,000.00**) are the Bidding Documents containing the Bid Proposal Profile upon payment of non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (**PHP250,000.00**) from **24 August 2009 to 04 September 2009**. Bid Proposal confirmed to all qualified bidders on **07 September 2009 (Tuesday) 2:00 p.m.**, venue of which will be announced by the PMDC.

Sealed Bid Proposals shall be submitted to and opened by the aforementioned address of the BAC Secretariat on/or before said time thereafter engaged in the preparation and submission of the bid shall be borne by the bidder. **All Bid Proposals shall be valid for one (1) year.**

Please visit our website for more information: www.pmdc.com.ph

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall secure the same through proper submission instruction.

PMDC further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract to any bidder or to waive any formality and to accept that as a result of this invitation, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. JAIME C. DE VEYRA, JR.**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)

Municipality of Pangantucan
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Pangantucan, Bukidnon

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Pangantucan invites interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the supply and delivery of the Construction Materials for infrastructure projects:

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable)
1. Construction Access Road, 54 meters — Brgy. Kalugmanan	3,171,246.34	August 19, 2009 1:30 P.M.	P 1,000.00

Interested bidders may acquire bid documents at the Municipal Engineering Office, Municipality of Pangantucan, Pangantucan, Bukidnon starting August 11 – 18, 2009, upon payment of non-refundable amount indicated above.

Please address your queries to the Municipal Engineering Office, Contact person ENGR. JULIE R. FUERTE, CELL PHONE NO. 09213886184.

The Municipality of Pangantucan reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at anytime prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **JOSE G. ASTILLO**
BAC Chairman

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OBITUARIES

...And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." – *2 Peter 1:11*

CARMENCITA NERI-LUZ

Promptly joined her Creator on August 10, 2009 at the age of 76

Her husband **Julio Luz, Jr.**; children **Lizzie, Cynthia** and **Ricky, Danny, Carmen** and **Oscar, Bettina**; grandchildren **Joseph, Nikki, Katrina, Bettina, Joshua, Nikkie, Carina, Patricia** and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Jacinto Chapel, La Funeraria Paz Sucat, Inside Manila Memorial Park, Dr. A. Santos Ave., (Formerly Sucat Road) Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Friday, August 14, 2009 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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INQUIRER OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory on the 32nd Death Anniversary of our Beloved Dad

JUAN P. GARCIA

who peacefully joined our Creator on August 13, 1977

Holy Masses for his eternal peace and happiness will be offered at the following churches:

- **KENRAM (Phils.) Inc. Chapel** ..... 8:00 A.M.
  Avalon, D.R.
- **Parish of Sts. Peter & Paul** ..... 5:30 A.M.
  Lagao, Gen. Santos City
- **Most Holy Redeemer Parish** ..... 6:00 A.M.
  Bolton Hill, Q.C.
- **Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary** ..... 7:00 A.M.
  Cainta
- **The Chapel of Saint Joseph** ..... 7:10 A.M.
  Marikit Garden, Pasig City
- **Nat'l Shrine of the Most Holy Rosary** ..... 8:00 A.M.
  Sto. Domingo
- **Our Lady of Mt. Carmel** ..... 11:00 A.M.
  Annapolis, Mkla., USA
- **Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace** ..... 12:15 P.M.
  EDSA, Mandaluyong
- **St. Pio of Pietrelcina Chapel** ..... 5:15 P.M.
  E. Rodriguez Ave., Q.C.

We, the members of Johnny's family, request his relatives and friends to join us in prayers for Dad.

To know and love thy mother is God's joy
For He has given each of us only one.
Thomas, the Apostle
Center for Integrative Complementary Medicine Inc.
convey our deepest condolence to the dear and loved ones of
Maria Bingbing y Aranda

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

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DURING THE RACE, media participants got the unique chance to drive a six-wheeler while IPC instructors were able to share a number of efficient driving techniques.

Taming these gentle giants

By Charles E. Bolton

IT'S A HERCULEAN TASK TOO SO unless. Firstly, it involved 11-unit 15-ton trucks. Secondly, the drivers were not expected to push these six-wheeler behemoths past 150 kilometers per hour or do screen-smashing turns into corners.

Finally, drivers were not required to pass the Easter big-time.

"Instead, the Isuzu Forward Eco-Driver is all about who could achieve the most fuel efficient driver along a 4.24-km track that we prepared inside Sherwood Hills in Cavite," said Reiji Takeda, president of Isuzu Philippines Corp.

Takeda explained that the event – IPC's way of fulfilling its pledge to help the motorists advocate forward to spite of the challenging times.

"This activity seeks to train IPC fleet customers on the optimum way of how to drive our new Isuzu Forward line of medium-duty trucks—formerly called the F-series trucks—that we launched this January," Takeda said.

Eco-drive, seminar

During the Isuzu Forward Eco-Driver event, 18 IPC fleet customers and 18 motoring journalists participated in driving either the six-wheeler or the four-wheeler.

Before the race, all participants attended a seminar designed to teach Forward drivers the proper operation techniques to get the most out of the new trucks and buses, especially in the area of fuel efficiency. Isuzu technical engineers conducted by Isuzu motorbikes for the track customers around the globe).

Driving the Isuzu Forward line, Isuzuan special projects editor Aries Espinosa achieved a 10.41 km per liter fuel efficiency and placed second behind Business Watch's Al Mendoza who got the best efficiency mark with 10.75 kpl record. Fernando Cojuco of News Today finished third (8.9 kpl) while Raul Balaregas of Reuters, fourth (8.7 kpl).

Driving the Isuzu Forward six-unit Shell Eco-Diesel Pulsar GX 6x4 kpl) while Elmo Llemoto of Manila Standard Today, second (7.22 kpl), Gil Cruz of Philippine Star, third (6.56 kpl), and Alfredo Ilagan of Asia Newsweek, fourth (6.32 kpl).

Normal driving category

In the most fuel-efficient normal-driving category, Manila Bulletin's Eddie Gutierrez, driving an Isuzu Forward six-wheeler van, finished first after posting a 5.48 kpl efficiency mark. She was followed by Lorenzo Abrantes of Inquirer who posted a 5.42 kpl efficiency mark.

Driving an Isuzu Forward line, Orlando Cacho of Metro Times got a 5.37 kpl efficiency mark to finish first and was followed by Domingo Mesina of Gulong (5.06 kpl).

More improved driving award in the category went to Antano Bernardo of Bulletin (from 4.66 to 8.1 kpl or 69.20 percent), and Epifanio Calayan of Jeff Transit (from 4.67 to 7.83 kpl or 71.128 percent) while in the automatic car category went to Alfredo Dingal of Asia Resurrey (from 3.91 to 6.32 kpl or 61.64 percent), and Tony Mendiolita of PLDT (from 3.72 to 5.3 kpl or 47.81 percent).

Commercial

IPC GMP Arthur Balmaceda explained that the Forward trucks are now powered by six-cylinder, turbo-charged intercooled and common-rail direct engine, a significant improvement from the truck's previous normally aspirated diesel engine.

The fuel performance has jumped as a result since the Isuzuan's 7.8L and EVB variants now generate 237 horsepower and 520.21 pound-feet per foot torque (versus the previous 171 hp and 340 lbft torque).

Balmaceda also informed that the new models are now Euro 2 compliant as well as 20 to 25-percent more fuel-efficient compared to the old 5-liter engines.

"Trucks and buses are the country's major transporters of goods and people. Thus, it's only important to have such type of vehicle that is not only powerful and dependable but also efficient and economical to maintain. This is what IPC wants to achieve with our Forward line of medium-duty trucks," Balmaceda said.

DWT more dangerous than DUI

THE PHILIPPINES IS REPUTED TO BE THE texting capital of the world, with 300 million to one billion text messages sent daily. While this is great for the telco industry's bottom line, it presents a problem in road safety now that recent studies show that DWT (driving while texting) is more dangerous than DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.)

Of the hundreds of millions of text messages going back and forth daily in this country, how many come from people who are driving a motor vehicle? No data have been collected on this, much less data on how many accidents were caused by DWT. But if you drive daily, it isn't rare to observe private car drivers as well as taxi cab and public utility vehicle drivers suddenly slowing down to read or send text messages.

There would be less DWT if motorists knew how dangerous it is. The latest study on DWT was conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute and entitled Application of the 100-Car Data-Based Studies with Video Cameras and tracking them for 4.8-million kilometers as they handled literature, frozen foods and other goods across the United States. The research found that when the drivers texted, their collision risk was 23 times greater than when not texting.

5 seconds

The study, which was funded by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration with a view to improving safety in trucks and buses, measured the time drivers took their eyes off the road to send or receive texts. The researchers discovered that in the moments before a crash or near crash, drivers typically spent nearly five seconds looking at their devices—enough time at typical highway speeds to cover more than 400 feet, or 120 meters.

Laboratory research at the University of Utah affirmed the results of the Virginia Tech study as it also found that drivers took their eyes off the road for about five seconds when texting. In the Utah study conducted over a period of 18 months, college students using a sophisticated driving simulator showed eight times the crash risk when DWT as when not texting.

Does the risks of DWT generally apply to all drivers, not just truckers, the Virginia Tech study indicated that the risk of DWT exceeds previous estimates based on lab research and far surpasses the dangers of other driving distractions. The DWT problem is gaining public attention in the United States where high-profile road crashes due to DWT have taken place and where a train crash in which 25 people were killed and 135 others injured was attributed to the train operator, who was texting at the time of the crash and was one of those killed.

The suggestion that DWT is riskier than DUI was also the result of a Transport Research Laboratory study commissioned by the BAC (Royal Automobile Club) Foundation in the United Kingdom in 2000. The study concluded that text messages took on average 6.2 seconds to compose while the phone owner was driving, compared with 3.2 seconds when not driving.

It also found that DWT motorists' reaction times deteriorated by 35 percent, much worse than those who drank alcohol at the legal limit, who were 12 percent slower, or those who had taken marijuana, who were 21 percent slower. Moreover, DWT drivers were more prone to drift out of their lane, with steering controlled by motorists 91 percent poorer than that of drivers downing their full concentration to the road. This compared with a decline of 33 percent by drivers 18.8 of marijuana. The DWT driver's ability to maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front also fell.

THE DWT problem is gaining public attention in the United States where high-profile road crashes due to DWT have taken place.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Banned

Next month in Washington, the US Department of Transportation is convening a multi-sectoral summit conference on what to do about DWT. At present, 16 states have banned texting while driving. Over here, cell phone use while driving is banned in Metro Manila, Makati and Cebu but this ban is not strictly enforced. A bill filed by Sen. Manuel Villar prohibiting motorists from using a cell phone unless it has a hands-free device is pending. Villar's bill should be updated to specifically make DWT illegal.

At a forum convention hosting on road safety last year, the Automobile Association Philippines called for a total ban on the use of cell phones while driving, whether hand-held or hands-free. AAP plans to take up DWT among other issues when Congress holds hearings on the new Road Safety Act of the Philippines.

* * *

TODAY'S RUBBER STOCKS: If I can't be good, I'd at least be good at it.

Wheels of time

Continued from page B5

motive Federation Inc. secretary general, added that the industry crisis continued to worsen until 1996. In 1994, only 6,510 units were sold. In 1995, 4,766 units. By 1998, a measly 1,620 units were sold by the automotive industry. No wonder the people had to make do with walking or bike to city.

Just as the Philippine automotive industry hit its historic low, Cory took her oath of office. What sort of cars were selling at the time? Mitsubishi Motors made the most of a volatile situation; its box-type Lancer and Galant, the choice of 2,096 and 493 buyers, respectively. Nissan also made relatively brisk sales—its Stanza 4-door and 5-door sedans selling 305 and 181 units. Isuzu 219 units of the burly Wawao Pick-up users also sold their cars.

In the luxury sector, only Mercedes-Benz could claim a respectable sales performance in 1986, selling 28 units of its sedans.

These new cars joined a plethora of other sedans, notably the Nissan Maxima, the diesel-powered Isuzu Gemini (yes, remember those cars?), Isuzu Impulse and Suzuki sedan that avoided Edsa—at all costs—early in 1986.

By the time The Cory signed Executive Order 156 creating the Car Development Program on Dec. 3, 1987, existing players like Mitsubishi, Nissan, Columbian Auto Car and Commercial Motor Corp. responded.

On Feb. 1, 1988, Cory then signed EO 157, the Commercial Vehicle Development Program, to replace the former administration's Progressive Truck Development Program. With this, truck assembler such as Hino and Pioneer's Motors Corp. signed in.

Interestingly, EO 156 seemed to set the industry schedule running in earnest.

According to a June 1992 report titled "The Japanese Management of the Presidency" by the Presidential Management Staff for a website that claims to be official Cory Aquino site), hundreds of hours were approved for acquisition by the administration to revise unworkable barangay bus companies and ease the "horrendous" commuting situation in Metro Manila.

Through easy-installment plans, companies were able to lend up their fleets. Tax incentives were given to companies which could import either new or used buses. The report claims that in just a few months, the public transport crisis was over.

Much of the public transport situation and optimism we see and experience today have their beginnings in the Cory administration. Provincial buses and tourist buses were given special permits to ply the routes of the cities. School and church buses, even AUVs, were allowed to pick up passengers. New routes in Pasig, Pantabangan, Mandaluyong and other areas were opened.

THE SKY rests on as well, and the hammers away. But the yellow cars has just behind the gray clouds.

FIT STOP on the San Agustin Church

Used cars vacuum fillers

Donald Isla, Isuzu Manila Inc. vice-president, recalled the time when he was still an entrepreneur for the used car business from 1983 to 1988.

"At the time (of Cory), the neo-conformist market was enjoying brisk sales. Used cars in first-to-second. Recalled. People were looking for good cars, but there were not much brand new cars," Isla narrated in a recent phone interview.

But two years into the Aquino term, Isuzu came out with its new Philippines. Other brands such as Honda, Ford and GM (as its partner/distributor) followed suit in the early.

Isla, who joined Toyota in 1988, recalled the new car brands didn't immediately take off in sales. But consumers concurrently having breaks by a succession of coup attempts and natural disasters. Only during Ninoy Aquino' time (1992-1998) was the momentum sustained.

"The club of the Cory administration were not much. It was the FVR administration which reaped the good foundations that Cory had set. It was the economy that drove the industry up," Isla said.

Next week: Foreign brands capitalize on a largely untapped market.

PAINT THE TOWN GRAND *In the Nissan Grand Livina*

I am forced to drive a truck made to look like a multi-purpose vehicle. It combines using as its diesel engine vibration, steering shock transmitted to seats like this one.

Yes it looks tall and big, like it wants to be prominent with seating for ten. But how many times during the week do I have ten people seated in the van? Not even on a weekend trip, in this island!

And that's another thing... it takes so long to get to the beach, and I am dead tired before I get there. And I'm assuming since it has the proverbial suspension, the jiggling continues from the entering, diesel engine, the hand-to-steer, and even harder to park, handling. Indeed, driving a nightmare.

And for me, driving should not be a chore.

Then I drove up one day to a Nissan dealer and experienced the Nissan Grand Livina. It was like heaven-sent. I imagine how all MPV owners (as of such compact proportions but still have the much sought after roominess that all MPV people in a pod that hides under the floor instead of hanging over the sides of the rear cargo hold.

I must instantly feel the difference. It really handled like a sedan, quickly accelerated like a sedan, fast and smoothed like a sedan, but could carry six much more as any standard passenger sedans and seven more. That fact has now much more durable and manageable than any seating configuration that I have seen.

It is a wonder how that tiny turbo horsepower engine can run. She took hold of the MPV, and drove it with the ease of maneuvering my hatchback. Huge panoramic windows kept things in view at all times. And the anti-pinching system I experienced with the glass was enough assure to hold me hand (say) till that while my laptop was gently resting in the van.

And gentle is the word for the ride. No jerking, shudder from the vibration worked of a diesel. No floating feeling from the "loose" of head-spring suspensions. Maybe fantastic or better elegant? It simply flies over the road. Like a gentle wood finished, in proper proportions accents the drive interior, all sports-car like. The chrome bezels of the instrument cluster indicate some genuine from the base-sold.

Guess Livina's technological DNA comes from a variety of Nissans, including the 370, Cubed Ripple Smoke Absorbers, mated to the "Grand Ride" suspension, which is built specifically for Philippine roads, deliver the supple firm ness and gentle canvas that is the compact MPVs ride.

Six-speeds make up the manual transmission gearbox, while and electronic automatic transmission program it to two speeds. I prefer the 4-speed MT, which is another adaptation from the Nissan car heritage. It goes from 0 to 100 km/h in 11.2 seconds as fast as any 1.8-liter sedan, with major fuel savings. Get up to 14kms per liter in normal driving conditions with manual and up to 11kms per liter on the automatic variant.

If transport people control table a more important to you, as it is to me, it is definitely worth looking into a Grand Livina. Retaining comfort traditionally compact, diesel fuel economy. A sedan ride and drive. The good way to shuttle people in style. Gregorio Bautista

Editor Cesar D. Mangaoang

MOTORING

'The simple housewife' push starts a stalling auto industry

Wheels of time

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Third in a series)

TWO WORDS CAN DESCRIBE the Philippine auto industry during Corazon Aquino's six-year term—"groundbreaking" and "bumpy." To put everything in perspective, the Aquino administration served more as a transition government, an interregnum bridge propped up by People Power to enable the Philippine socio-political and economic engines to cross over from the one-man rule of the Marcos regime to the democratic system Aquino and her supporters espoused.

So, it would be understandable that the Aquino administration would have to endure major hiccups along its six-year odyssey. Auto industry veterans who were already active in the industry in the late '80s described the seven failed coup attempts to overthrow the Aquino government as "the stars." And pin-ups the government fixing them "first" in the middle of natural disasters such as the Pinatubo eruption and the northern Luzon earthquake. It was, quite literally, a "Free Fire Zone" of a presidency, a "simple housewife" like Cory had to endure.

But endure Tita Cory did, and more remarkably, despite all the challenges, her administration made vast headway in the motoring industry particularly in the public transport and motorsports arenas.

It was during Cory's term that the Car Development Program was revised to widen motorists' choice of new cars and stem the onslaught of imported second-hand cars. Three more was the Commercial Vehicle Development Program (which offered incentives to truck and bus operators to expand their operations) that benefitted the commuting public with more buses plying the streets of urban centers (around the end of the Marcos regime, such bona fide commuters had to wait for hours to catch a bus).

For these and other legacies of the Aquino administration, a small group of motoring journalists decided early Wednesday morning, Aug. 5—the day of Cory's funeral—to honor her and what she meant for with a simple 9-car convoy completing 11 circuits of the Ayala Circle (representing Tita Cory as the 11th president of the Republic).

The 9 cars included three Subarus from Motor Image, the two were privately owned vehicles of the motoring journalists group. The group included this writer, Wheel Gallery president Sammy Linares and Top Gear Philippines helmsman Myron Barlis.

As a natural offshoot of this motorcade/tribute, Inquirer Motoring has decided to look back at the time of the Aquino presidency, from 1986 to 1992, and take a trip down memory lane. What was in like in the economy in the '80s? We asked veteran drivers and auto industry experts who already had their driver's licenses at the time—yellow ribbons were first being tied around the "Ole Oak Tree."

BP motoring in the doldrums

As far as Frank Nacua could recall, by the time Cory's husband Ninoy Aquino was gunned down at the Manila International Airport (now Ninoy Aquino International Airport) in 1983, the motoring industry was already on the decline, with car sales registering a measly 20,000 units (compare that to the "heyday" of the motoring industry in Marcos' time in 1,978 at 93,000 units sold). And by 1984, Nacua said that almost all major car brands had left the country, seemingly in reaction to what these companies thought was a brewing political showdown between Aquino sympathizers and Marcos henchmen.

Nacua, who began his career in the industry in 1962, said it was the Philippine Auto-

WHEELS B9

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Lia B. Bernardo

LIFESTYLE Parenting

Sex talk–with the kids

By Lito Gutierrez
Contributor

Precepts drawn up by celibates are irrelevant to our children's testosterone-driven lives

LATE ONE NIGHT ABOUT two months ago, the youngest politician Joseph Estrada told me over coffee at his Tangerine restaurant in Greenhills how he once stood beside a bishop in a restroom, each relieving himself.

He noticed that the prince of the Church was looking heavenward, his eyes closed as if in prayer. "Dear Lord," Erap recounted the holy man was praying, "is this the only one I've got for my 6'-4?"

I am circulating loosely (to use Erap) had contacted the association in Taguig a thousand times, but my reaction was more than a chuckle, and he appreciated my getting it.

I was reminded of the joke when reading a online-lettered response to my essay, "What if it were your daughter in a sex video?" (Lifestyle Parenting, June 17, 2009). The letter writer, Ching Arcache, contended today's youth that vulgarity is "the best gift" one could give to his or her prospective spouse on their wedding day.

Values

I could almost hear hoots from the peanut gallery. Yet, indeed, it seemed like a sense coming all the way from the Inquisition when adulteress were stoned to death and masturbation was a ticket to eternal damnation.

"Nowadays," Ninety Ching wrote, "the youth are besieged by media... that lead to emasculation deprived values."

In, she continued, "it is good to inculcate in them, by word and example, such values as purity and self-control," by which "they will be properly guided when confronted with temptations to engage in pre-marital sex."

I thank Arcache for her response to my piece, but the fact is her message

MICHAEL Hsiung and his wife Carla

AMANDA Manansala, Becky Manansala and Lizzy Santos

DR. RANDY Francisco and Cora Valdez

FRANCIS Macalo, DJ Lopez, Benjamin's Mel Meer and Stephanie Chong

Guest at chic launch buys 4 jewelry pieces and watches

ADORABLE couple Anya Kerigbak and husband Andrew Cajucom

DINKY and Dre Lopresti

GUESTS Mario Kerigbak, Tatler's Mia Banzuelo and publisher Irene Marcel Francisco

THE WORLD-RENOWNED and prestigious Bulgari hosted a chic and exclusive cocktail happening to introduce the brand's latest addition to the Assioma D ladies watch collection, Assioma D in steel and diamonds and Bvlgari Cocktail jewelry collection last week at the Greenbelt 4 mall.

The venue was transformed into an exquisite abode, taking inspiration from Bulgari's 125th awesome anniversary jewelry rules. Tables held its famous hat tiles, dabbings. Dark green foliage highlighted with dark hues of purple cabbage roses and tall silver candelabras transformed with vines elegantly ornamented the bodies tables. The superbly prepared dinner was catered by The Brasserie Hotel Manila, paleontgen.

While our wedded get wrought of the to-die-for menu, the fashion show began at the entrance of the Bulgari boutique.

As we sipped champagne, Bulgari's newspaper woman, the unmistakable Mario Katigbak was sailing from one to an over the super successful night and sale of the totally encouraged and dazzling pieces, dabbings. A whisper came my way that one guest grabbed out one, but now hers the watch collection and another two than the jewelry collection.

Pss, paleontgen, diamonds are definitely a girl's best friend, 'di ba?

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arnaoche

Photos by Alex Vass Hagos using YKL Photo Solutions

JANE Reagan-Chong and Rod Zamora

JOEY Pulido and Marco Katigbak

GORGEOUS models show off Bulgari's latest dazzlers. Marisa Benipayo, Bea Soriano, Phoemela Baranda, Rissa Manangkil, Perry Reina and Gianna Cabrera

If a toy fits toilet-paper tube, it could choke your kid

How to choose right play stuff

TOYS "R" US IS HOLDING A MONTH-long "Baby Fair" this August. The fair showcases a wide array of toys, accessories and other consumer goodies, promos and discounts on select items and freebies.

The store offers the following toy-buying tips:

- **Choose age-appropriate toys.** Read labels on toy boxes to know if toys will match your child's age and ability. Toys that squeeze or produce cute sounds (such as talking robots, soft musical books, cuddly animal music players, discovery gems, musical mobiles and play-and-grab toys) and those with brightly colored images and designs are especially appealing. Mobiles and musical toys, rattles, soft squeezable balls, teething toys, picture books and pop-up toys from Toys "R" Us are ideal choices.
- **Cherish the toys's quality.** Toys should be well designed, durable and interesting enough to hold a child's interest. Imperative toys do not necessarily mean they are suited to your child's needs. Many affordable ones can aid in a child's development and enhance his or her imagination.

Before buying a toy, inspect these specifications. Is it easy to open or to handle? Is it too loud or too heavy? Too much unnecessary stimulation or noise may irritate your child.

- **Make sure the toy is safe.** Examine it for any removable parts. If the part fits your child's mouth, it could be a choking hazard. Visualize if your or any of its parts can fit inside a cardboard toilet paper tube. If it can, the toy in its part is may cause choking. Also avoid toys that have sharp edges.
- **Seek suggestions from other parents.** Learn from their experience with different toys. Toys "R" Us Stephen branches at Robinsons Department Store.

- **Be safe.** Some choices that will encourage your kid to engage in healthy imaginary and skill-building play:
- **Blocks:** Young babies can play with blocks or toys as they are able to grasp an object to their hands. Shape sorter block sets like Melissa and Doug Shape Sorting Cube and Playskool Form Fitter are great tools for learning.
- **Music set.** Babies and toddlers love music. Allowing them to create their own music helps them gain confidence and an ear for what sounds good to them. The Tiny in Disco Mic with Sound and Shark Guitar are good choices.
- **Walkers and trikes:** Older babies and toddlers enjoy moving about. Toys such as Disney 3-in-1 character Trikes and Fisher-Price 2-in-1 Roadmaster improve their motor skills.

The Baby Fair is simultaneously happening in all Toys "R" Us branches and selected Toys "R" Us Toyboo branches at Robinsons Department Store.

Sex talk—with the kids

Pa-turn page C3

Not long ago lost its resonance with most of its target, the youth, and most likely even their parents. She can blame the media, but I am of the school of thought that media is like a knife: it's a utensil that you can use for eating, or for sticking into somebody's throat.

I would rather suggest to her and to us all, the faithful and hitchless alike, to take another look at the primary sources and the noblest purveyors of their perscriptions. After just straight caution why the Devil, who may or may not be wearing Prada, is succeeding.

Pleasure

Look at the Church. In the US, for instance, notwithstanding such earthshaking scandals as the child-sex-abuse cover-up and celibacy, the church has spent hundreds of millions of dollars settling lawsuits arising from the sexual predators among its clergy. In the Philippines, it continues to demonize birth control even as the populations is spiraling out of control, not to mention priests who have found pleasure in unlawful sexual knowledge.

Look at political leaders, particularly the ones who have used Christian dogma and have taken on the mantle of traditional values to pursue their political agenda. Take the senator who, oblivious to his own hypocrisy, espoused one, called against a certain "pervert" who allegedly uploaded sex videos of himself and his unsuspecting partners.

In the US over the past few years, there's been a clutch of senatorial cads, most of whom rise to fame after years. Until I'm sure everybody has learned of the fabulous pervert and erstwhile vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, another family-values Republican, whose teenage daughter got intimate kept to her hunnie and bore a baby out of wedlock.

All this is evidence that the proselytizers of sexual mores has choked, from theological doctrines that objectify sex to evil to liberal thought arising from practical demands of modern living.

This has, of course, caused an upsurge among reckless-bound Church leaders who now have to figure out how to convince its flock that sensation is still a prevention that, as it was once told, could cause hair to grow on your palms.

As parents, we have to fill our heads from under the sand and recognize that our children's attitude and conduct toward sex and sexuality are better addressed by acknowledging current realities. By adhering to precepts drawn up by celibates—who, more obviously, don't know what they are talking about—are run the risk of harvesting intolerance to their young, nanosecond-driven lives.

First lesson

I remember my first lesson in sex education. I was a high school seminary freshman and my "teacher" was a wavy-haired Mexican who occupied the lower bunk of our double-decker. He told me how their maid seduced him and how I, if I ever had the luck he had, should position myself during the act.

Blow-hard story, grab for cupping the tale and letting it play in my mind through the week, I sought confession, for which I was asked to pray three Hail Marys. For a while, though, I was obsessed with making sex with one of the girls who manned the seminary kitchen. I still wonder what if I had a diverse conversation about sexuality with my parents?

But I was not going to let that happen with my three girls. Over evening, bringing home my videos for the umpteenth book, she and her younger sister seated in the unit's third row may hear from my paying visits, were giggling and cheering, an indication they were talking about boys.

Then suddenly, in the unit's darkness, my eldest asked: "Hey Dad, what do you think?"

"About what?"

"Boys."

"What about them?"

"What do you think about them?"

I knew they were pushing my chute, and, for a few moments, the only sound I allowed was that of the sound guitarist one of the truck's engine. Then I blurted out: "All of them," I intoned with all the gravitas I could muster, "just want to get their hands into your knickers."

"Duh! Interview!"

Interview, indeed. But that broke the ice and my sex education with their began.

Reluctance

I can, of course, understand my fellow parents' reluctance to chat up their kids about such gnawing matters. Which is why I would like them to check out what's going on in a high school in the Bukidnon city of Malaybalay (http://www.mindanaobalitabalfield.edu.ph/news/6-3-outreach.php).

Its sex education teachers have apparently taken up their issues another notch. And I have a sense that they are doing something right, because the usual self-righteous suspects are wailing as if the anti-Christ has come.

What the school is doing is just adding a tad more realism to the usual birds and bees stuff. For instance, instead of just talking about AIDS, the teachers bring in persons afflicted with the disease. Instead of just passing condoms as decorative, the students converse about the pleasures of sex. In fact, one of the tools they use is a pamphlet produced by UP's National Health Services, called "Pleasure."

That has triggered a Berkshire reaction among the evangelicals and their social and political cohorts, who are saying that such frank discussions would only lead to more unwanted teen pregnancies, abortions and sex crimes. This reasoning has, of course, been long ago debunked by science and surveys.

As ingredient for a good marriage or partnership, sexual congress has as much to do with knowledge of the anatomy and technique as with love and respect. Nowadays, virginity is just a romantic surgery away.

The author is the editor of Asian Dragon Magazine. E-mail: bingsantos@yahoo.com

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

Ad agency turns into party place after office hours

Minimalist/modern retro design creates tranquility in workplace from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

THE REFLECTION on the Vitrocrom mirror not only brightens the space but also emphasizes the simple, geometric but crisp-edged shapes of the furniture.

PHOTOS BY BOBBY VERA

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

GRAPHIC DESIGNER and executive Ramon "Mon" Ferrer's design studio and advertising agency, I-Icon, blurs the boundaries between office space and home.

Following the Chinese shophouse tradition, the ground floor of his two-story unit at Serafina Condominium, San Antonio Village, Makati, is his workplace while the top floor is his private enclave. With an eye for aesthetics and a penchant for collecting furniture and furnishings, he gives his office a new spin.

A true Virgo who is obsessed with neatness, Ferrer eschewed clutter and ornamentation for functional, elegant space. I-Icon's look is a hybrid of minimalism and modern retro. On the one hand, the pieces hark back to mid-century design. On the other, the shapes and colors are pared down to minimalist basics; it is a welcome lull to a job where one is bombarded with vivid images.

The decorative working elements emphasize geometric shapes—mostly circles and rectangles, a restrained color palette, and smooth textures, as opposed to embellishment.

Lighting is industrial in design with a focus on track lights and set lamps. The minimalist

AD AGENCY 01

ECTHO/SDH the vintage phone and wire sculpture centered in color and shape with the round table and ottoman, their smooth surfaces harmonize with the furniture finishes.

GARFIELD

AL LIPIN

FUSAO BARDY

DICK TRACY

LOVEHONOTS

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK

BEN

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BIRD MACHINE

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CROSSWORDS PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

			3					
	5		8		1		9	
		2				6		
			3		4			
7			2	5	6		1	4
4	3			8		7	5	
	9	3		1	7	5		
			4	2				
				9				

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	9	1	4	7	2	8	6	3
4	6	2	8	9	3	7	1	5
8	3	7	1	5	6	2	9	4
7	1	5	6	2	9	3	4	8
2	4	6	3	8	7	1	5	9
9	8	3	5	4	1	6	7	2
6	2	4	9	1	8	5	3	7
3	5	8	7	6	4	9	2	1
1	7	9	2	3	5	4	8	6

STRIKING accessories infuse energy into a contemporary space. The minimalist wall clock is made of black blocks that blend with the red-wave walls. The white Maruni seat, made of thick bubbles, contrasts with the sleek lines.

DISTINCTIVE elements make a quirky touch, such as this retro glass lamp juxtaposed with an antique Chinese accent side table.

THE ENVIRONMENT step team starts a bar with a softer approach in forms and hues. Rounded lines blend with the streamlined pieces. Massage deep-ark brings friends a nonstop reach.

Ad agency turns into party place...

From page D1

look features telescoped walls with little tubes to high light Weiner's accessories. The layout is open, with simple room divisions consisting of flat-screen drawers, quirky curtains made of red strands and low-rise cabinets.

THE PALETTE is restricted to two colors—black and white. One bold color, red, emphasizes objects. Visually complex items, such as the recycled window grilles made of circles, rectangles and round windows, are integrated into the white space.

Dynamic space

To make the space dynamic, Peters combines bold geometric shapes with dark surfaces and pulls together decorative elements in asymmetrical balance. That is, objects are either displayed off-center or mismatched, and there is an odd number of furniture and accessories arranged to create a more casual but interesting look. With fewer pieces, the empty space it forms appropriated, each piece accentuated by placed in bolder relief.

His furniture—a custom-made of hollow reinforced cubes and mid-century finds—are sleek in silhouette and upholstered in soft, white leather. Good, neutral accents such as stainless steel or chrome are combined with fantastic pieces and flatware. Wood can be worn and subtracts finish a polished finish. The flooring is low-maintenance, white recycled marble.

To add warmth to modern textures, Peters integrates rough textures such as a shag-pile carpet, an ottoman, rust-woven area rug with consistent to window and a tufted leather accent.

In keeping with the minimalist look, Peters drops unnecessary elements, including computers. He says the desks are practically empty since the authors bring their laptops. Books are hidden in white-painted built-in shelving systems with frosted glass and the audiovisual components are stored in an antique Chinese cabinet, which serves as major accent piece.

In all, the new look helps create a sense of tranquility in the workplace. After office hours, the simplicity lends itself to a party place.

CATTLEYA

Foundation promotes awareness on environment protection

SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1977, the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation (MSBF) Environment Center has been known for environmental, educational, livelihood and beautification activities.

Headed by foundation president Chito Bertol, the Environment Center grows millions of Philippine indigenous forest trees. Trees like Bagras, Ti Liwayway, Banuyo, Narra, Palmera Cherry, Dita, Acacia, Mahlow Mahogany, Eucalyptus, Pine Tree and many more are available in all sizes at reasonable prices.

Occupying seven hectares, the MSBF Environment Center has also provided livelihood and employment to families through its nursery, organic fertilizer, charcoal, tree seedlings, vegetable seed production and sales, tree pruning, relocation and rehabilitation, tree-doctor service, landscaping of government and private properties. It also opened commercial centers like the King Luzon Flowers and Plants in the Cordilleras; Green 2000; Paeonopsis's Wedding Orchid Center in Davao; Seven Seas Pet Shop; Bahayan Garden in Batanes; Carrothan-Orchids in Cavite; Secret Blossoms in Baguio; Lambana Tropical rare plants boat shrub and Thailand; Mel's Plant Art School; Philippine Orchid Society office; Mega Orchids in Batangas; Hogedi's Garden; Bonsai Hub by Grant; Vic's Garden in Calamba, Laguna; Vic Orchids; Bonsai Heaven.

MSBF Environment Center has partnered with the Boy Scouts of the Philippines in setting up a tree nursery there. Here, the scouts are taught to set up, maintain, plant and care for trees in heavily damaged forests and public areas of the metropolis.

From its tree-pruning project, the center has set up three kiln-ovens to produce charcoal from branches gathered by the crews. The charcoal is then sold at very reasonable prices. Bicarbonate will employees.

A greenhouse now has a cottage-style garden center where rare ornamentals, flowering plants, tools, fertilizers, pest control and other horticultural products are sold at discounted prices all year round.

John Garden House, a recent addition, has fresh vegetables, herb plants, vegetable seedlings, wheat grass, greenhouse equipment.

The Manila Seedling Bank Environmental has a spiritual chapel, The Spirit of Love Community, open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., including Sundays and holidays. For more information, visit the complex on Quezon Avenue corner Elliot, QC; tel. 9247855 to 62, 9260586.

WHEAT grass

New washer saves energy, is extra-quiet

By Rock Pfleiderer
Contributor

SAMSUNG RECENTLY launched its new washer and dryer combo series, which runs in many leading technologies such as Diamond Drum, Airwash and VRT™ (Vibration Reduction Technology).

The enhanced diamond-shaped design of the washer's drum upgrades wash performance, preventing fabrics from sticking out and getting damaged. The smaller water exit holes minimize shrinkage or wear and tear.

Samsung's unique Silver Wash technology has microbe-killing capabilities. It uses the natural power of ionic silver to sterilize, providing greater fabric care even in cold water without bleach. This reduces the need to use hot water and thus saves energy.

Using hot air, the Airwash feature eliminates unpleasant odors, effectively and even removes wrinkles without using water. Clothes come out ready to wear right after Airwash.

To avoid the buildup of lint particles in the washer, Samsung's Magic Filter removes lint particles from the water. Separation of lint even when water level is low. It uses an indicator light to easy routine cleaning of lint.

Using DD Inverter Motor technology without belts or gears, Samsung's laundry machines are also exceptionally quiet. The drum keeps perfect balance, reducing vibration and noise to the lowest level.

SAMSUNG'S new washer-dryer (left) and dryer combo

WASHING machine's drum has embossed diamond-shaped design

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HOUSE of Chingay Lagdameo

HOUSE of Dodi Diaz

CHINGAY Lagdameo and her sister Dodi Diaz

Two sisters bond in ideal community

TWO SISTERS EMBRACED new roots amid orchards and smiled up strong-hearting their bond.

Eight years ago, Chingay Lagdameo and her sister Dodi Diaz made their way south of Makati to look at a then-little-known development just outside the metro, Ayala Westgrove Heights.

"Someone told us how beautiful it was there, so we wanted to look around," said Diaz.

"The minute she first signage for Westgrove came into view, we just felt something different," recalled Lagdameo. "Different from Makati, where the traffic is so bad and the pollution is all around us."

Westgrove, with its trees and gardens, immediately pulled the two sisters in, who are close and have been inseparable since childhood.

Lagdameo made a reservation and her sister immediately followed, realizing she couldn't bear the thought of living in the city without her constant companion. "I reserved the lot right beside hers," Diaz said. "We would have lived side by side had I not realized that maybe that would've been a little too close! So I bought a lot in a different phase."

In 2002, Lagdameo and her family moved into the newly built home her nephew, architect Loren Diaz, had designed and built for her. The wood-and-stone structure, surrounded by expansive garden and picture windows, was an ideal complement to the restful way of life she and her husband had quickly settled into.

Lagdameo and Diaz's families quickly established themselves in the larger Westgrove community.

"It's the type of place where people knock on your door and are welcomed in," said Lagdameo. "We know all our neighbors...we are each other's in the saturday Mass, at the market, or at Fourso's. There's no invasion of privacy but we're all friends here. It's the kind of place where someone gives you a bottle of fragrant because she just came from Tagaytay. Or (I) cry over a recipe and share it with my neighbor."

LIVING room in Diaz's house

Both sisters are active in the community. Diaz heads the fenegreat committee, while Lagdameo, who pioneered many socials in Westgrove, also established the Westgrove Symphony Series, a touring classical concert where the library Manila Community Orchestra performs for different communities.

The roots these two sisters have established in Ayala Westgrove Heights eight years ago have certainly grown, helped along by the nurturing community they have grown in here.

For inquiries on Ayala Westgrove Heights, call (632) 892-3000, e-mail ask@ayalalandpremier.com or visit www.ayalalandpremier.com. Model houses are available for viewing onsite.

Orchid and garden show

ORCHIDS FOR HEALTH AND Wellness is the theme of the Philippine Orchid Society's Mid-year Orchid and Garden show slated Aug. 27–Sept. 7 at the outdoor garden fronting Quezon City Hall corner Elliptical Circle and Kalayaan Avenue, Quezon City. The show is divided into two sections: landscape for guests to appreciate the artistic way of arranging plants and commercial for acquiring plants. There will be landscaping and individual plant competitions. For more details, contact Jenny at 981-8480/402 or e-mail philorchids@yahoo.com.

Seminar-workshop on bonsai culture

A THREE-DAY SEMINAR-workshop on bonsai culture will be conducted by Norberto professor Gonzalo S. Mallillin Aug. 28-30, 1-4 p.m., at Mallillin, King Louie Garden Center, Manila Seedling Bank corner Elliptical and Quezon Ave., Quezon City. The course covers identification of materials, sourcing, styling, wiring, potting, repotting, techniques on propagating plants, and care and maintenance. A fee will be charged to cover all materials provided with at least two hands-on plants, aluminum wires, pruning scissors, two bonsai pots, potting medium and moss. Participants will also be provided with snacks, handouts and certificates. Register at Mallillin Arts, Flower Mart Manila Seedling Bank, tel. 8094560, 4102410, 8941-8301362.

ENTERTAINMENT

Top 10 films at the US box office for the three-day weekend beginning Friday 7

	Title	Gross	Wks
1	G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	$54.7 M	(1)
2	Julie & Julia	$20.1 M	(1)
3	(Hidden)	$19 M	(3)
4	Harry Potter	$18 M	(5)
5	Ironic People	$11 M	(3)
6	The Ugly Truth	$11 M	(4)
7	(Hidden)	$10 M	(1)
8	(Hidden)	$9.0 M	(2)
9	(Hidden)	$7.7 M	(3)
10	(Hidden)	$5.1 M	(10)

New!
Nutty Choco Sundae
Vanilla ice cream topped with a gooey nutty chocolate sauce, sprinkled with caramel glazed pili nuts.

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TWH Choice Robb awardee Robert Pattinson

Weighing in on Willie

Readers chide TV host, but some call for sobriety

WILLIE REVILLAME HAS REPORTEDLY taken time off to reflect on the fallout caused by his cutting remarks on national TV in which he outlawed smokers from his ABS-CBN noontime show "Wowowee" on account reserved on President Cory Aquino's funeral cortege.

On Saturday, it was announced on the program that its beleaguered, controversial host was on an "indefinite" leave.

Though not an indication that he's bowing to an online demand for his head by "concerned" television viewers (33,000 as of Monday), this seems to show that Willie is being very careful about this latest flap.

Meanwhile, Inquirer Entertainment was flooded with reactions from readers via e-mail, many of them indignant as expected, but quite a few offering sober assessments.

Wow, pare!

acelinguian1@gmail.com

My family and I watch your show here in San Francisco (USA). But that Monday (here, I think it's the last time) ... He's ang yabang mo. I have lost all respect for you.

grace4skin@yahoo.com:

Willie is a very sarcastic and rude person. He should be banned as an entertainer [for] conduct unbecoming. His amount of explanation could excuse that [irresponsible].

Bernard (bernpacleb@yahoo.com)

Willie [displaying] his infamous temper on national TV is the most obnoxious behavior.

FEEDBACK

papayaya7@gm.net

His comment on Cory's funeral was not good, especially coming from the host of a popular show seen all over the world.

fred_ejsar@yahoo.com

Despite previous controversies and suspensions, Willie Revillame still sees like he's the boss ... I think it's time for ABS-CBN to gamble on a new noontime host, if only to protect the network's integrity.

Gene Yap (Gene.Yap@gmx.com.hw)

Hindi ang isang beses nangawat ang kabastusan ni Willie Revillame ... Dapat iwe ayusin[g] ipag-funeral sa show niya.

kuchi@ymail.com:

Brutal.

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Fangs did not suck for teens

UNIVERSAL CITY, CALIFORNIA – "Twilight" didn't suck at the Teen Choice Awards.

The adolescent vampire drama dominated Sunday's ceremony with 11 wins, including Choice Movie Drama, Romance, Lipstick, Bumble and Soundtrack. Kristen Stewart won the Movie Drama Actress category, while Robert Pattinson picked up two surfboard-shaped trophies. (See Movie Drama Actor and for Male Hottie.

ACTRESS Abigail Breslin arrives at the awards show

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Fangs did not suck for teens

From page

mobile news

MILEY Cyrus, Choice Movie Actress: Musical/Comedy

BRITNEY Spears, Ultimate Choice awardee

KRISTEN Stewart, Choice Movie Actress: Drama

Actor in "High School Musical 3" and Comedy Movie Actor and Rockstar Monster in "17 Again."

The ceremony itself was peppered with several odd moments.

Kathy Griffin arrived on the red carpet with Lisa Johnstone, teenaged ex-fiancé of former Alaska governor Sarah Palin. Mike Tyson took shots to Joe Jonas' head as part of a stunt. And before presenting the Choice Movie awards, comedian Dane Cook pleaded with Vanessa Hudgens to keep her clothes on.

AP

Weighing in on Willie

Misunderstood long

Willie Revillame's controversial remarks on the passing of the Cory funeral homage, while not quite meant to cut ours, is not enough to justify lashing of humiliating him publicly. He only took, perhaps, so that he was not remembered and he came on too strongly with Cabral's misleading his feelings. His remarks are neither transparent, malicious nor disrespectful to President Cory. It is those who smear him who really desecrate Cory's memory. She stood for freedom, and that includes freedom of expression. I am sure that she would have stood up in his defense.

Perhaps it's asking too much of personalities used to basking in the limelight to be circumspecting in their choice of what [to show or say to] the public that [they] owns them. It seems they are just not capable of such discernment. Many of them are not conscious of the responsibility that comes with fame. So fame and up-close-and-personal people who can benefit of discretion and a sense of [how that would bring] out the best in Filipinos. Until [then], we [will] have to endure a primary-concern, drama-ridden [society] where those [who] are doomed to be mentioned as well.

As good as it gets: Bosses' shouting match

By the Entertainment staff

NOW, FOR A REALITY CHECK.

Although people would like to think that everything went smoothly during the coverage of former President Corazon Aquino's five-day wake and funeral, there was a slight glitch. All right, not so slight.

Top network Entertainment Official reportedly engaged stridently (naked News Executive) in a shouting match.

Apparently, EO got miffed because of a news item that put one of the channel's talents (and EO's pal) in a bad light. Instead of bullying the station's star, the rapper hosted Controversial Celebrity dropped to smack.

Another powerful Entertainment Exec sided with EO and purportedly spilled the beans to the press. EE was irked because EE allegedly bypassed the bosses and made a decision that eventually spurred a huge scandal—again involving CC.

Scapegoat

Quite belatedly, Concerned Friend said CC was just a "scapegoat" and that a string of inexpensive linked to CC was orchestrated by influential politicos to divert attention from their own shenanigans. Funny thing is, CF is involved in CC's latest caper.

All's not well—no!

Moreover, the apparent ceasefire between the top two warring networks during the Cory coverage was fragile at best.

A Kapuso insider complained of "minor" irritants that, in TV Land, could quickly become "major." Alas, EI chose to keep mum, to honor the memory of Tita Cory.

Twisting at the park

In her Twitter account, Miriam Quiambao wrote that fellow beauty queen Bella Gutierrez got "nervous" because of a supposed bomb scare at the Manila Memorial Park during Tita Cory's funeral.

The two beauties attended the funeral and were in the middle of the action, so to speak. Fortunately, the threat turned out to be a dud.

Missing Willie

Instead of addressing the latest controversy plaguing his current TV "Primetime," host Willie Revillame went running last Saturday.

He wasn't feeling well, said co-host Daniel Padilla/guest on ida. A source told Bandera that Revillame has taken an "indefinite leave of absence" from the show.

"He's gone mind-searching in his Tagaytay TV home," said the source. "He wants to think about what happened and is contemplating a big decision soon."

Price of stardom

Above his newborn Carla Abellana tells Pre-view in this month's issue. Her first-ever magazine cover (here she left almost greeting the host role in "Wansilinda," a new GMA 7 soap: "There was definitely a lot of pressure to look good, to sound good, to be good, to do well with others. There were times prior to saying that I wouldn't get to sleep at all. I'd pray so hard, and I'd have panic attacks."

Paula's options

PASADENA, Ca.—ABC is casting the choice of Brain working in life Paula Abdul, who said she's quitting "American Idol."

ABC programming chief Stephen McPherson told the Television Critics Association on Saturday that he was "reassured" to hear she'd decided to leave the top-rated Fox series and that he's convinced Abdul, whom he called an old friend. McPherson told Abdul he'd love to see her at ABC, home of "Dancing with the Stars." AP

Kid, you Rock!

KID Rock: Ball open for pizza man

SANDUSKY, Ohio —Kid Rock is helping a pizza delivery driver critically injured during a robbery.

Spokesperson Nick Snow says the rock star sent the delivery driver a $1,500 check after reading about the attack in The Cincinnati Enquirer while in the southern Ohio city last month for a concert.

Jenny Colvin, 28, said police he was beaten with a brick and a wooden plank July 20 while on a delivery. He has had reconstructive surgery on his broken cheekbones and reminded more and now has a slight hearing loss.

A 20-year-old man and two teens have been charged in the attack. AP

Top of the talk shows

PILIPINAS: "Wag kang-ge-ge, pero hindi 'yung bata."

Put those who missed her weekend's gabbiness on TV. (And why are we surprised, if we are surprised.)

✦Boots Mae Quintia, asked if at "talk-social politician" gave her a boost in San Francisco, California as a gift:

"Yung regalo, parang ... hindi ako[illegible]. Di ko ma-imagine, parang ganoon, pero hindi 'yung bata." (Ano raw?)

✦Bada Mae, asked who the person is:

"Secret ego of mga pare columnist. At saka dapat ok. I'm non-sexual. I'm sorry [he's to publicist]." (Ok, sure.)

✦Alicia Rivera, asked if there's reason for Marian Rivera to "worry," with her Dingdong Dantes in an upcoming soap:

"Hahi siegle ako ngayon, solo content dyang dapat iky-worry. Kailangan ngayon pa lang, may line na ... Intensive what's work and what's personal." (Ito short, 'di ako type ni Dong.")

✦Mark Anthony Fernandez on his mom Alma Moreno's alleged bad debts:

"Ngayon ko lang nabalitaan ito. I hope it's not true. But if it is, she can pay, no problem." (Count money.)

✦Marian Rivera, asked how she spent her birthday with Dingdong Dantes:

"Kinain lang sa bahay kasama yung buong family." ("Hindi ba a whole day is it?)

✦Sam Milby, after Ina Alonzo slapped him while doing an intense dramatic scene from their upcoming movie:

"Pumasa sila sa hospital ... may buto sa sandman ko." (Baka may history ang slap na 'yun a?)

✦Tom, asked if there was a possibility he would fall for Boy:

"Of course it's a possibility. I don't think there's a guy who wouldn't like a girl like Sheu." (Of course. Anything is possible when pretending a movie.) PDN Gerry Pinto

(Journals, We Buzz)

ENTERTAINMENT

Cristine Reyes' gorgeous date

CRISTINE REYES TOOK A GORGEOUS date named Sho in the birthday bash of show biz reporter Nelson Canlas in Linden Suites, Cubao. Cristine's childhood sweetheart, is no newcomer actually.

They have no commitment per se but from the looks of it, they're getting there. After her on-and-off romance with Dennis Trillo, Cristine is finally giving her heart another chance to find happiness. DIMPLES Seguerra Woman's body is in great shape ... and so is her heart.

Mystery guy

Another gorgeous girl who's back in the dating jungle is Kazel. It enjoyed watching "The Proposal" with her mystery guy.

"It will be unfair to talk about him at this point," she says. "It's too mushy darling, but [meeting him] was people because I wasn't [sure if I liked myself] to a certain degree."

Will it's heart find the clique that clicks with its every beat? Will the guy take the cue from the movie they watched and propose to it anytime soon?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Not her man

Rhian Ramos is ecstatic about bagging the much-coveted role of Jodi in Gma 7's adaptation of the Korean hit telenovela "Stairway to Heaven."

Any apprehensions about portraying Jodi? "It's gonna take more energy, focus and dedication than any other character I've done," Rhian says.

Isn't she wary that her team-up with Engelbeng Dantes might make Marian Rivera jealous? "I really hope no jealousy attacks will occur," she quips. But is it possible for her to fall for Dong? "It's possible to fall for anyone I work with especially because of the amount of time, trust and teamwork the show requires," she explains.

"But I won't give my heart to anyone I'm not meant to be with, either for personal or professional reasons."

Hmm ... Rhian has no intentions of taking the stairway to Dong's heaven.

Carla J's statement

The ongoing brouhaha about the National Artist award is such a sensitive matter. Artists are entitled to their consideration. It's just sad when their passion for the arts collide.

From Tito Boboy Villa, wife of Erik Cayler. J. Caparas: "Carla J has been helping lots of people through his big kita patronized by the public in bowls, movies and TV. Gusto ng mga detractors si Carla na censor si Presidente Arroyo ruling her choice of National Artists. The side comes on a prisoners of national honor, not normal. Kapag sila ang nanalo, natatawa! Lame' at walang solusyon. Kapag galing sa kanya sabi ni show biz, nagpadi-redi nyong nanawalla."

Why exactly Carla J for an award he didn't beg for? Hopefully, this mess will be ironed out not just for art's sake. One sey, one heart.

Anniversary specials

Catch Pinoy Box Office channel's 6th Anniversary specials: "Sweet to Heart," Saturdays at 1:30 p.m; "Timeless Ride," Sundays at 3:30 p.m. and Ride A, Freestyle and MMFF's concert "All Hits Live," Aug. 20 at 9:30 p.m. Big surprises come to small hours!

E-mail: wenwebgloboburgos@yahoo.com

CRISTINE Reyes with childhood sweetheart Sho at the birthday bash of show biz reporter Nelson Canlas.

OPENING TODAY

Showboyz

Stars Toffee Calma, Kristoffer King, Archie de Calma, Topher Ramero, John Miller, Ramon Bautista; directed by Cris Pablo

A provincial lad (Ramero), male stripper (King) and drag queen (Calma) get entangled in an unlikely triangle in a seedy gay bar. Director Pablo describes it as "the hippest macho dancing movie ever." While other films of the same genre are usually "dark and tragic," Pablo explains that this digital money "investment is fun-swelling" of a bunch of sexy dancers, lovely in Bohemian fashion and Eyeza, fantastic and Roxxa; and in Cebu and Davao.

And I Love You So

Stars Bea Alonzo, Sam Milby, Derek Ramsay, Candy Pangilinan, Cesar Montano; directed by Laurenti M. Dyogi

Widowed teacher (Alonzo) falls for a troubled man (Milby) who also lost his wife. Milby confesses that this is his "most daring" role. Alonzo, who lost 15 pounds for this movie, tackles a mature character as well and does a love scene with Milby which, according to director Dyogi, "took hours to finish." This romantic drama serves as Dyogi's comeback after "All My Life," released five years ago.

Clive Barker's Book of Blood

Stars Jonas Armstrong, Sophie Wu, Doug Bradley, Paul Blair, James Watson; directed by Julian Gardiner

A paranormal researcher (Wu) studies a college student (Armstrong) who appears to be channeling messages from the dead. Jason Bird of Tyo for Film calls it "the cinematic equivalent of a pop-tarts." Syd Bridge of Dread Central thinks it's "a faithful and reverential film that interprets Barker's [short] stories almost to perfection." Lucas Gore of Slipcover finds it as "a horror movie by adults ... chilling."

The Hangover

Stars Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms, Heather Graham, Zach Galifianakis, Mike Tyson; directed by Todd Phillips

After a bachelor party in Las Vegas goes haywire, three pals frantically search for the missing groom, Christopher Tookey of Daily Mail raves: it's "rude, crude, darkly funny ... and akin to 'Sex and the City.'" Simon Brand of Empire Magazine notes: it's "a furiously paced, inventive take on a tried-and-tested formula." Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian agrees: it's "crass, offensive, incorrect ... but very funny and bizarrely gripping."

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METRO EAST

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4 BOOK BLOOD	4 AND I LOVE YOU SO

PIONEER

STA. ROSA

1 AND I LOVE YOU SO	1 AND I LOVE YOU SO
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IMUS

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ANGELES

TACLOBAN

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BACOLOD

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2 AND I LOVE YOU SO	2 AND I LOVE YOU SO
3 THE PROPOSAL	3 THE PROPOSAL
4 PUBLIC ENEMIES	4 PUBLIC ENEMIES
5 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE	5 HAUNTED
6 LITTLE BOY BIG BOY	6 LITTLE BOY BIG BOY

ILOILO

Cuck!

STEPHEN Hejar

'True Blood' back on Max for Season 2

THE ILLUMINATED second season of "True Blood," an HBO original series, airs Saturdays starting Aug. 22 at 9 p.m. on Max.

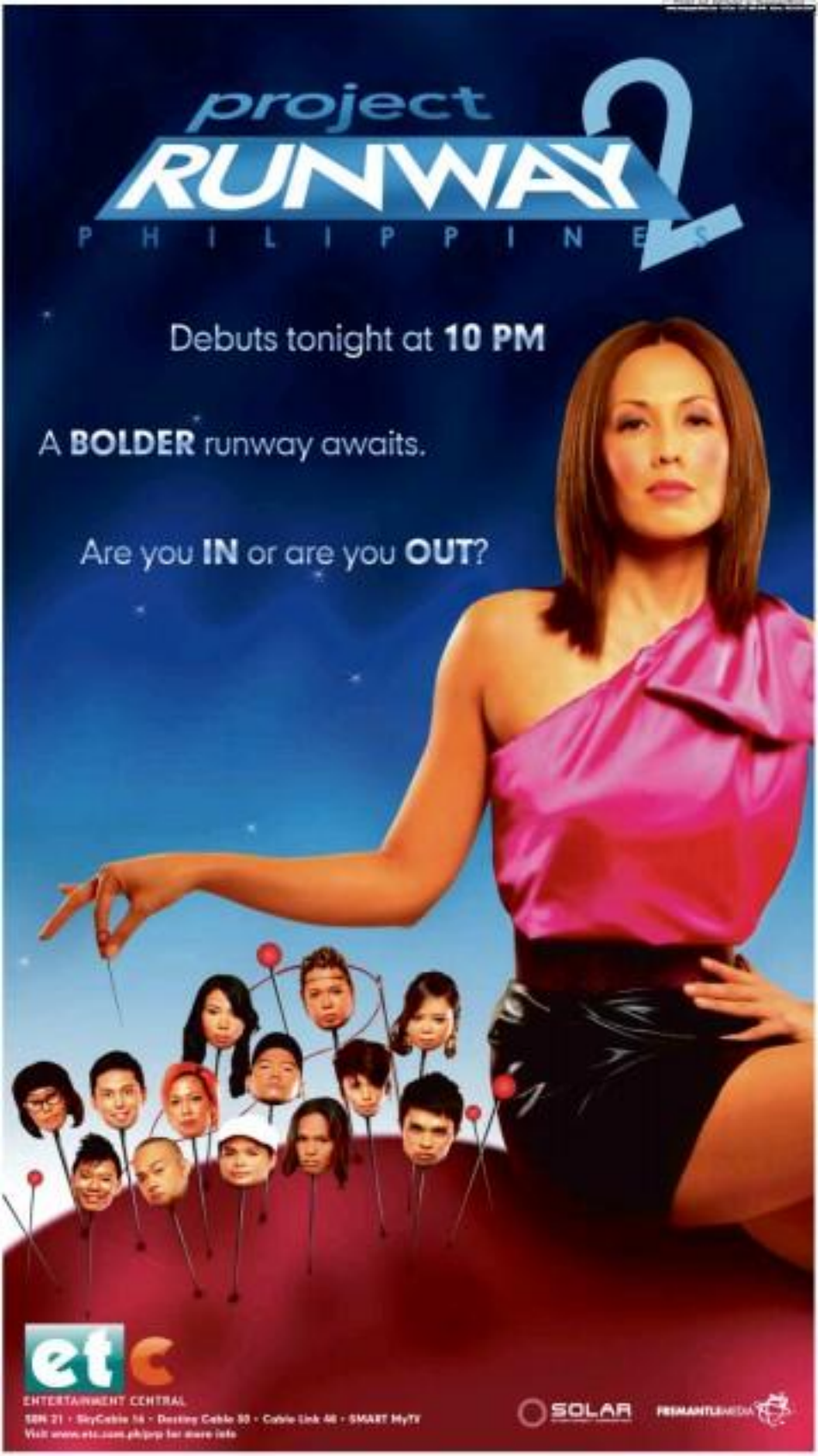
A mixture of romance, suspense, mystery and humor, "True Blood" takes place in the not-too-distant future when vampires have come out of the coffin. With the invention of synthetic blood, they no longer need humans as nutritional source.

The series follows the romance between telepathic waitress Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin) and her vampire BF, Compton (Stephen Moyer).

Carly in Japan

Nickelodeon launches brand new episodes of "iCarly" starting today and every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 4:30 p.m.

In "Go to Japan," Carly (Miranda Cosgrove), Sam (Jennette McCurdy), and Freddie (Nathan Kress) go on a fact-filled, mix-soaked adventure in Japan.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